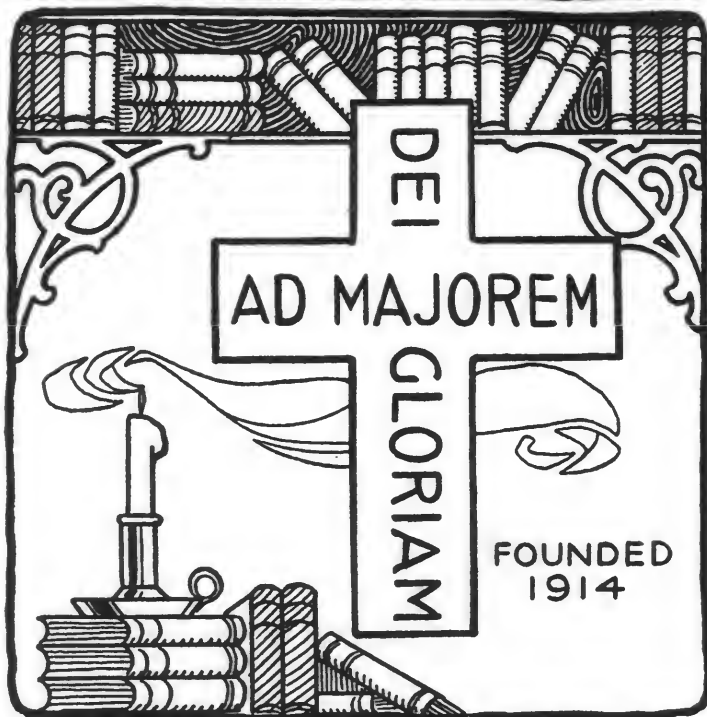


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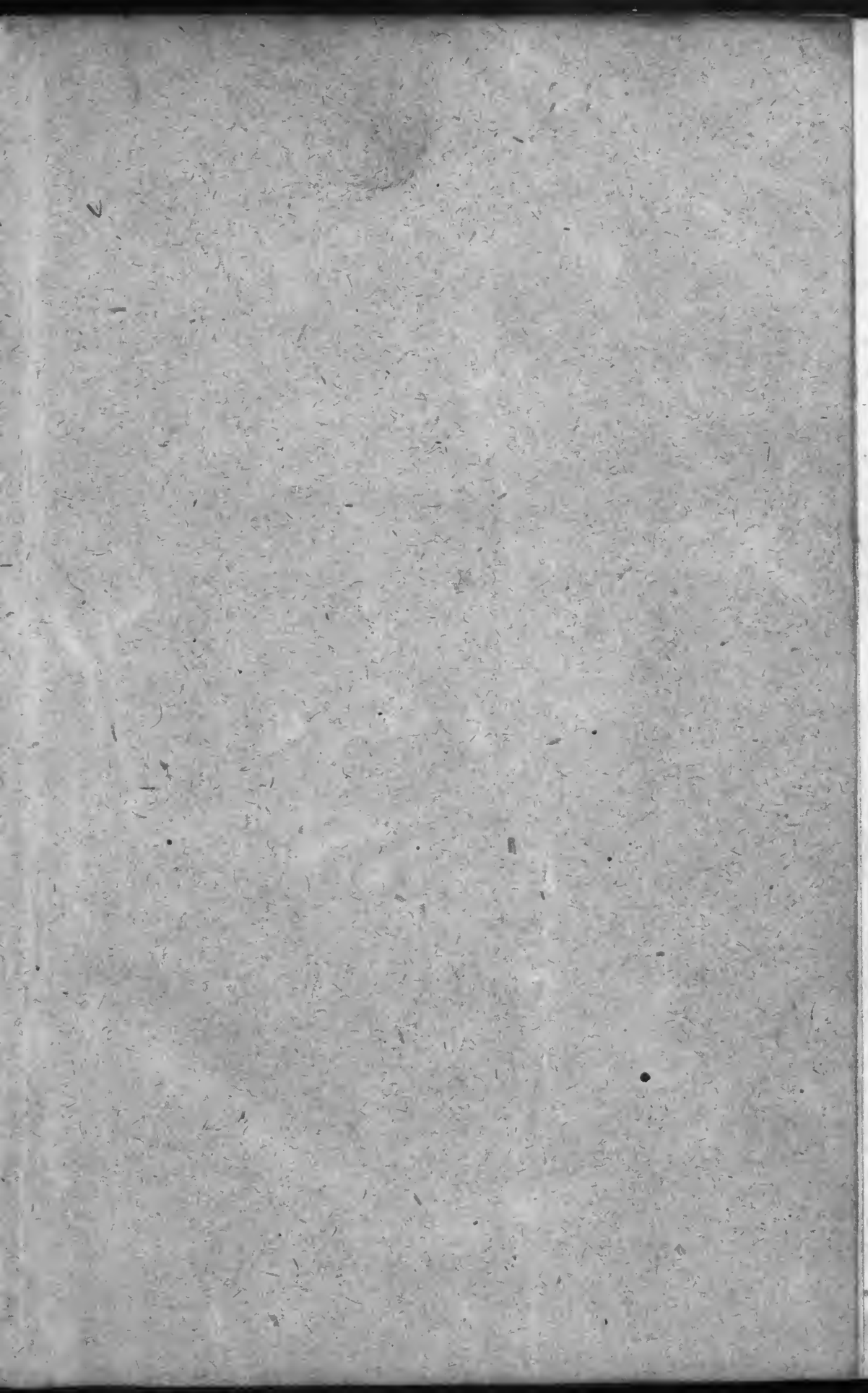
# School of Theology



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THE  
JUSTIFICATION OF A SINNER,  
AND  
SATAN'S LAW-SUIT WITH HIM.

IN A DIALOGUE

BETWEEN

TWO MEN OF DIFFERENT EXPERIENCES.

By *WILLIAM HUNTINGTON, S.S.*

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL

AT PROVIDENCE CHAPEL, LITTLE TITCHFIELD-STREET,  
AND AT MONKWELL-STREET MEETING.

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## P R E F A C E. .

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COURTEOUS READER,

**T**HE following treatise is a spiritual medley of heavenly things;—an entertainment for the mind and conscience of gracious souls, who, for the want of gospel light to discern the rich provision and stability of God's covenant, are often sunk to live beneath the privileges thereof. I have frequently heard people, who I believe to be truly gracious, declare themselves to be bowed down, and continually dejected, under the apprehensions of a dreadful scrutiny which they suppose the Saviour will have with them in the day of judgment. In order to remove the believer's groundless fears, to shew him the privileges of the covenant, and to excite his gratitude to God, this little treatise is published.

The things that are considered, and attempted to be explained, are the spiritual resurrections of a sinner—his arraignment and justification—his spiritual birth, heirship, and inheritance—his evidences for heaven—the conflicts he hath with the devil—and the office of Christ as an Advocate.

And in order to convey my thoughts as intelligibly as possible it is written by way of dialogue,—question and answer being an excellent way of conveying information, and with which the word of God is replete.

The persons made choice of to carry on the dialogue, are Cushy and Ahimaaz, two servants of David, both styled in Scripture *good men*. Cushy is here represented as one wrought upon by grace while he observed the visible hand of God with David; which is intended to shew how a Christian's life, and the hand of God with him, impresses the mind and convicts the conscience of a sinner. Ahimaaz is represented as running with tidings before he was sent; which is introduced as a caution to the many in our days, both learned and illiterate, who take on them the office of the ministry, without any spiritual qualification for it, or divine call to it;

it; who are encouraged and emboldened by nothing else but pride, insensibility, and ignorance. A thirst for human applause, and ignorance of the experience and wisdom of the the Church—ignorance of the plague of the human heart—ignorance of the majesty of God, and the importance of the ministry, appear to be the basis and bulwark of too many.

The houses of Saul and David are introduced as prefiguring the family of the old Adam and the household of faith. Cush's halting between the two is intended to exhibit the struggles that the weak believer feels between the flesh and the spirit. The revival of the work of grace on Cush, at the death of David, is introduced to shew that many young converts, who are a scourge to the servants of God in their lives, are brought to lament their death, being ignorant of their worth till they feel their loss; as Israel of old, who was a perpetual burden to Moses for forty years; but when he was dead they bemoaned him for thirty days: or like Saul, who was so often a plague to pious Samuel in his life, yet would sell himself to the devil for a sight of his mantle when he was dead.

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I have studied plainness in this work, and endeavoured to be as intelligible to my Reader as possible; not expecting that the consequence of the noble, the acquired knowledge of the scholar, the wisdom of the critic, the refined judgment of the polite and gay, will ever submit to a perusal of any performance of mine, unless it be to cavil at it. To be short, if any part of the revealed will of God be made plain to the seeker or to the believer; if his judgment be informed, his doubts and fears removed; if any blessing of the covenant be discovered; if his mind be entertained, his faith established, and his covenant God endeared to him, I trust my end is answered; and what the outside professor, or the open enemy to truth may have to say, will have but little weight with me, except it be to pity him.

That the believer may read without prejudice, and profit by reading, is the desire and prayer of, Courteous Reader, thy willing servant, and tried companion in tribulation,

W. HUNTINGTON.



THE  
JUSTIFICATION, &c.

CUSHI having lost his royal master, took a solitary walk to reflect on the past experiences, and wonderful deliverances, left upon record by him ; until, in a measure, he thought they became, according to his sensations, like his own experience. He suddenly found his understanding much opened, worldly things vanished from his mind, and every thought of his heart appeared at command, which he employed in reflecting on past mercies, and in pleasing anticipations on future glory.

Reflections on his past conduct brought many things fresh to his mind, which afforded matter for real contrition. But the thoughts of God's long forbearance and slowness to anger dissolved his soul, and excited his warmest gratitude. He came suddenly to the brow of a little hill, which is called the Hill Mizar. Here Cushi meditated upon the former deliverance of his royal master.

On this spot, said he, his false hope gave way, and the burden of his sins sunk him into the keenest sensations of divine displeasure, which involved him in all real and imaginary horror. Here it was that he prayed out of the depths of despondency ; and his prayer was answered by the Saviour in an open vision of death on the cross.—

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Here my blessed master saw the crucifixion of the Son of God. Yea, he saw his persecutors pierce his hands and his feet. He saw them part his garment among them, and cast lots on his vesture. This made him so dotingly fond of this little hill. Who can describe the feelings of a soul encompassed with the fears of death, and chains of guilt? When the great Redeemer appears burdened, as the sinner's sponzor, in all the agonies of an unparalleled sufferer, burdened with all his sins, under the awful arrest of vindictive justice, and sinking into the threefold shades of treble death.

Oh love, love, love! Love fixed upon an enemy—an enemy in open rebellion: love that would undertake to cope with divine vengeance: love that would expose truth, purity, and innocence, to ignominy, scorn, and derision; and all to redeem, rescue, and reconcile a rebel to the best of sovereigns, and make the completely miserable, eternally happy. My master's hope sprung from the visions of death, and pursued the resurrection of his adorable Lord, *to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that shall never fade away.*

Surely it was an imperceptible faith that made him importune; and it was patience in importuning that brought him to such a blessed experience; and the experience of such a deliverance brought him to hope.

Oh that I may never forget, or lose the sense of his deliverance; the petitions that he put up; nor this sacred spot, where his deliverance was wrought.

wrought. Here it was that he said, *Oh, my God! my soul is cast down within me, and thou raised me up; therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites from the Hill Mizar. Deep calleth unto deep.* Psalm xlii. 6, 7.

Here it was that the clouds of God's displeasure against his sins began to gather thick over his head, and to threaten a fatal discharge on him. The water-spouts were felt, and justice spoke in them, demanding perfect obedience, or infinite punishment. This made him try to hasten his escape from the stormy wind and tempest. Blessed be God, who revealed his crucified Son to him, when under the cloud of impending judgment, whose blood, from the becalmed conscience of my royal master, met with the approbation and favour even of divine justice itself.

Well might the evangelical prophet say, and *a man shall be an hiding-place from the storm, a covert from the tempest, a river of water in a dry place, and the shadow of a great rock in this weary land.* The Lord God of Israel did not reveal his dear Son to my valuable master with a drawn sword, as he did to Balaam, who said he should see him, but not now, and behold him, but not nigh; but he accompanied the vision with an appropriating faith. To see a Saviour and a Judge in one person, without faith in his salvation, is of all sights the most afflicting, and would sink a soul for ever. *I had utterly fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.* Psalm xxvii. 13.

Cushi now descended the Hill Mizar, which led with a gradual descent into a verdant valley. Here he was blessed with a most ravishing view of the covenant of promise, which afforded matter of pleasing and delightful meditation, and every fresh discovery gave him fresh entertainment, which caused his soul to sink down into the sweetest rest and quietude, while the glorious beams of light and love shone with divine radiance upon his whole soul.

In this light, he saw a little river run through the midst of the vale, which his thoughts led him to trace to the fountain head ; and he found it to be (what his royal master called) the still waters. Psalm xxiii. 2. which came from the Father to the Son; and through the Son to us.

These waters forcibly reveal the Father's love, and the Son's salvation, and sanctify and make mete souls for heaven, without whose aid no promise comes with power, nor does the word quicken or refresh the soul.

Poor Cushi, finding the good work, formerly begun, to be revived, and restoring grace so sweetly to operate on his soul, was afraid to engage again in state affairs, or in any other lawful calling, fearing a second relapse ; which holy fear certainly was good. But as God does not light a candle to put it under a bushel, nor under a bed, that it should be hid, but on a candlestick, that it may give light to all that are in the house, it is necessary to let it shine before men, that they may see the light within, while it reflects its holy rays

rays without. To be diligent in business, and fervent in spirit, is a command given to every Christian, and what the most eminent saints have been brought to submit to, from Abel, the first martyr, to Amos the prophet, and even from Jesus Christ, to Paul the tent-maker.

However, it was with much reluctance that Cushi left his lodgings, and the verdant meadow. But so conspicuous a proof of the faithfulness of his Lord, made him depart with this persuasion and confession, *the Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul; he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.* Psalm xxiii. 2, 3.

Cushi now rose up, and travelled off, most sweetly refreshed, and he intended to walk quite through the verdant valley, but he had not got far, before a bright cloud appeared in sight, and he expected a shower; and when it came over his head, he felt a most pleasing sensation on his spirit, wonderful motions in his mind, and a particular flow of affections, which for a while made him stand as one entranced; and he supposed he saw a real cloud. But this text occurred to his mind: *In the light of the king's countenance is life; and his favour is as a cloud of the latter rain.* Prov. xvi. 15. And so he found it, for the thoughts of God in the promises dropped in such an abundant manner on him, that his cup overflowed, till he vented it in confession, adoration, thankfulness and praise. *The words of a man's mouth are as deep wa-*  

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*ters, and the well-spring of wisdom as a flowing brook.* Prov. xviii. 4. Cushi, finding such divine light and understanding crowd in upon him, sadly wanted to minute down what he saw and felt; but his mind was so taken up, that all efforts to begin a diary proved vain; he had no thoughts at command for that; he was therefore forced to breathe out the overflowing of his joys to the fountain of life, from whence they came.

The church, when thus filled, is a fountain sealed, until the seal opens, and lets it forth. *A garden inclosed is my sister, my spouse, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed.* Song, iv. 12. But when the spirit opens the heart, it plays all its streams into the fountain of divine fulness, from whence the streams came.

Thus the Lord *drinks his own wine with his own milk, and eats his own honey-comb with his own honey.* Song, v. 1. Or, to speak in express terms, he is entertained with the fervent devotions produced by his own spirit. Thus God the Father, and God the Son, are glorified in the gracious soul by God the Holy Ghost. God is a spirit, and will be worshipped by his own spirit in us; and as a God of truth, he will be worshipped in truth; not as an object represented in a false light, nor with a false heart.

Cushi's devotions were truly divine, for he broke forth into the following expression of sympathy and gratitude to his much-slighted and long-neglected Lord. O thou source of all divine happiness, and fountain of light and life, who hath  
promised



promised to the parched and barren souls of thine elect, both the former and the latter rain moderately in their season; I received thy blessed word at first with the dew of thy special grace to give it root; but, alas! worldly-mindedness soon caused my joys to wither; but thou hast revisited my barren heart, and made the *parched ground a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water*. Astonishing, that an heart, once the *habitation of dragons, should be turned into a springing well*. Isai. xxxv. 7. *Oh that I never may be left to wander from thy shadow again, nor to slight the sanctuary service of my God. Blessed are they that dwell in thy house; they will be still praising thee; blessed is the man whose strength is in thee; in whose heart are the ways of them, who, passing through the valley of Baca, make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools*. Psalm lxxxiv. 5, 6.

Cushi had now almost crossed the valley of Baca, and suddenly he espied an hill before him, with a gradual ascent, and he shortly began to ascend it; and the higher he went, the greater his joys were; till at last he vented the fulness of his soul in praise and acclamations of joy, saying, *Oh my God, as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth, so the Lord God doth cause righteousness and praise to spring forth in my once barren, but now revived heart*. Isa. lxi. 11.

Cushi having gained the summit of the hill, saw a fine spreading tree, and under it a seat, with a man sitting thereon, who had a book in his hand.

The reader being pensive in thought, did not discern the approach of Cushi. Cushi perceiving this, approached as near as he could, without disturbing the attention of the reader, and stood still to hear him read. The passage that he was reading was, *and Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-fireb; as it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen.* Gen. xxii. 14.

Cushi said unto him, understandest thou what thou readest? The good man started up in a surprize, and said, How can I, except some man should guide me; and he desired Cushi to sit down with him. I am glad, said Cushi, to find thee blessed with a sense of thy native ignorance, and endowed with a teachable spirit. Pride will not submit to learn of those whom God hath taught. I think a teachable spirit is one of the characteristics of a child of grace. The Jewish Pharisees, who were wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight, refused the tuition of God the Saviour, *became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish hearts were darkened; professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.* God has determined to destroy all grounds of boasting, and to stain the pride of all human glory. Hence it is, that the Prophet Isaiah foretold that God would take away all trust in *the mighty man, and the man of war; the judge, and the prophet; and the prudent, and the ancient; the captain of fifty; and the honourable man; and the counsellor, and the cunning artificer; and the eloquent orator; and that he would*

*give children to be their princes, and babes should rule over them.* Isa. iii. 2, 3, 4, 5. Men of great natural or acquired parts can never submit, without humbling grace, to yield obedience to (what one calls) the foolishness of the cross.

However, the Prophet says, *whom shall God teach knowledge? And whom shall he make to understand doctrine? Them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts; for precept must be upon precept; precept upon precept; line upon line; line upon line; here a little, and there a little.* Isaiah xxviii. 9, 10. This is an humbling declaration for a counsellor, an astrologer, a star-gazer, or a monthly prognosticator, to regard. Isa. xlvii. 13. But as Paul says, *If any man will be wise, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.*

But to give my dear brother an account of this mountain, on which we sit: I believe it to be Mount Moriah, which, perhaps, may signify the Lord revealing. If it does, it shews how those souls are exalted, whom the Lord condescendeth to teach, to whom he reveals his mind and will, though it be attended with bitterness, which may be included in the word Moriah. Mount Calvary, you see, is almost opposite, where our Lord was crucified; and he whom God teacheth on Mount Moriah, is sure to have some views of what was done on Mount Calvary. *The mountains shall bring peace to the people and the little hills by righteousness.* Psalm lxxii. 3. The grand design of divine teaching is, first, that we may know God in his law to  
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be an holy, just God ; and secondly, that we may know him reconciled in his Son ; as a God reconciled to sinners. The gospel reveals him, *And this is life eternal, to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent.* Hence the gospel is called the word of reconciliation.

*Abimaaz.* If this is Mount Moriah, it is the very spot where God gave testimony to Abraham's faith, even from heaven ; and to be sure he must ascend this mount with as heavy an heart as a mortal could carry. But God often lays the greatest burden on the faith of his favourites, just before he intends a deliverance. As speaketh the Lord by Moses, that he will appear *when he seeth that his people's power is gone, that there is none shut up or left.* Deut. xxxii. 36. And such conspicuous deliverances have a blessed tendency to endear God to his people, and excite their love and gratitude ; and I doubt not but this was the case with Abraham. The thoughts of slaying his beloved son must go near his heart, and the simple expressions of Isaac, when he said, *Where is the lamb for the burnt offering,* must touch Abraham's feelings very sensibly. But when he received his little one back to his arms, and obtained an articulate testimony of the love and approbation of his Maker, it must lift him as high in joy and heavenly-mindedness, as the thoughts of slaying him had sunk him in sorrow.

*Cushi.* I am glad to find thee, my brother, such an observer of the gracious dealing of God.

If

If believers were to observe the various frames, changes, and deliverances that pass on their souls, and bring them to the word of God, they would be more comfortably established in the truth than they are.

Many gracious souls are strict observers of external forms, and modes of worship, to which they are led by the wisdom of men, and prejudiced in favour of, by the bigotry of men, instead of adhering to an experience on their own souls. *Let every man prove his own work, saith Paul, then shall he have rejoicing in himself, and not in another;* that is, he shall rejoice in the power of God, not in the wisdom of men.

I believe Abraham had the sweetest views and sensations on this mount, that ever he had in all his pilgrimage. His son Isaac was a sweet type of Christ, the promised seed in whom all nations were to be blessed. The wood that Abraham laid in such particular order, prefigured the cross. The intended victim laid on the wood, represented the blessed Jesus, the meek and passive lamb, submitting to be nailed to the accursed tree. Abraham's knife shadowed forth the flaming sword of justice, once seen by our first parents at the east gate of Eden. By Abraham's parental love and affection for his son, the immutable love of God was exhibited, who so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten son, John iii. 16. freely offering him up for us all. Abraham's joyful reception of his son (as it were from the dead) typified the cordial reception

reception of Christ into the bosom of God the father. As Isaac prefigured Christ as a lamb, and as the promised seed that should come, so the ram prefigured Christ as the everlasting father of all his sheep.

The horns of the ram represented Christ's kingly power; his being hung by the horns in the thicket of bushes, shewed the submission of the Omnipotent Saviour to the wicked hands of men, who are compared to briers and thorns. Cant. ii. 2. Thorns being badges of God's curse, shewed his being made a curse for us; and that he was to be crowned with thorns, was typified by the ram's being hung in the thorns by his head.—Thus Abraham's faith saw the Saviour, both in his beloved son, and in the bleeding and burning ram; and to this agrees the Lord himself: *Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it and was glad.* John viii. 56.

*Abimaaz.* It is a pretty light, my brother, that you have cast on that text; and the proof that you brought from the Saviour's mouth, is a confirmation of what you have said. But some of the learned tell us, that we should be very careful how we allegorize and spiritualize the scriptures, lest we get into the regions of fancy. Though I do believe there are many in our days who are stigmatized enthusiasts and fanatics, who are blessed with divine tuition, and wonderfully supported by the Holy Ghost; there is no limiting God, nor drawing lines for him to work by; and I believe the



the heart that feels the keenest pierce from justice, is the most sensible of the balm of mercy. Where conviction draws the deepest furrow, the incorruptible seed will take the deepest root.

Such souls as experience the greatest change, have generally the brightest views of divine revelation. The darkest clouds are often succeeded by the brightest manifestations. *God discovereth deep things out of darkness, and bringeth out to light the shadow of death.* Job xii. 22. And such souls will ever be found to be the most spiritually minded, and the most heavenly in their conversation.

*Cusbi.* I have heard of men giving such cautions, and of warning people against allegorizing the word of God, or giving it a spiritual meaning; when I have thought that too many legalize the gospel, and make it more like a law than a covenant of grace; and make the Saviour more a law-giver, than a law-fulfiller, by talking more of the commands of Christ, than of the infinite satisfaction made to law and justice by him.

This is a kind of remedial law, as some term it; such being ignorant of the killing power of the covenant of works; and strangers to the constraining power of the covenant of grace, have set up one of their own, in the very throne of the great Mediator, as a rival to him, who is the end of the law, and the author of faith.

What good can accrue to sinners, from a law of human invention, set up in the place of the Mediator, is hard to tell. Israel would have been  
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consumed by the fire of God's jealousy, more than once, if Moses, the typical mediator, and Phineas, the typical high-priest, had not stood in the gap, or breach, that their rebellion had made between God and them. But how a gospel law of human manufactory is to fill a breach of infinite dimensions, and bring about a spiritual union and likeness, where there is an infinite disproportion, is a mystery that I despair of ever finding out; and a mystery that all the divines in the world can never explain to me.

But this conclusion we may warrantably draw, that if Noah, Daniel, and Job, could not stand before God, to make up the breach, we are sure no contrivance of man can do it. Besides, this law of human wisdom lays no weight upon him that is mighty to save; but the whole burden of conditions is laid on them that are dead to God, and without strength; and how the dead in sin are to perform such conditions, is another riddle which can never be explained.

The spouse, under the old economy, received many consolations from the types and shadows, while she eyed her beloved Saviour as the object of her future hopes; she called the two covenants her two breasts, and eyed the Mediator as the end of the law and the author of faith, and had light enough, under that dark dispensation, to see that no day's man was fit to make up the breach, but him. Feeling his love, she says, *A bundle of myrrh is my well-beloved unto me; he shall lie all night betwixt*

*betwixt my breasts.* Song, i. 13. Her faith viewing him as the fulfiller of the law, and the glory of the gospel, she rests satisfied with the sanctuary service, until the blessed period should arrive, when her beloved Lord should be revealed. *Until the day-break, and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense.* Song, iv. 6.

As for the caution against allegorizing and spiritualizing the word of God, I see the Saviour and his apostles perpetually at it.

Solomon's preference given to the lowly mind, in the presence of the prince, Prov. xxv. 7, is brought in by the Saviour as a check to the pride of Pharisees, in their choice of the highest seats, and is intended to shew, how he differs from the humbled believer, who, like the prodigal Son, begins his religion with a sense of the plague of his own heart, and a keen hunger for the bread of Heaven, before he sits down to feast on the fatted calf. Luke xv.

Elihu's comparing his heart, filled with divine inspiration, to a bottle that had no vent, Job xxxii. 19, is brought in by the Saviour to shew the necessity of a new heart, and a new spirit; *but new wine must be put into new bottles, and both are preserved.* Matt. ix. 17.

Job's description of the eagle, Job xxxix. 30, is introduced by the Lord to shew the destruction of Jerusalem under the Roman eagle; but much more to shew the entertainment of heavenly

venly

venly minds, who by faith feed on his own flesh and blood, as their spiritual meat and drink, John vi. 53; and sweetly prefigures the certain protection of the elect beneath the shadow of his wings in the great and terrible day.

The two mountains mentioned by Moses, Gerizim and Ebal, Deut. xxvii. 12, are an allegory. Mount Gerizim, where the blessings were to be pronounced, prefigured the church of Christ, on which the Spirit of God pronounces the benediction, and was a figure of *mount Zion*; for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore. Psalm cxxxiii. 3.

Mount Ebal, from which the curses were to be pronounced, prefigured mount Sinai, where the law and its curse were given, and is Hagar in the allegory, and *agreeth with Jerusalem that now is, and is in bondage with her children*, Gal. iv. 24, 25, and reaches to every work-monger in the whole world,—for as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse, Gal. iii. 10; and so it will appear in the great day, when the Judge will say to Zion (on which himself was crowned King), *Come, ye blessed of my Father*;—and to Hagar, and her bond children (who rejected his reign), *Go ye cursed*; these two will appear to be mount Gerizim and mount Ebal with a witness; and there the blessing and the curse will remain to all eternity.

*Abimaaz.* The things which you have mentioned, my brother, are consistent with the analogy

logy of faith, and your method is well calculated to bring the word of God down to a holy familiarity with the weakest believer; which certainly is a method that every man of God ought to adopt, or aim at, more than shewing his human learning, or knowledge of the languages; for Paul says, *he would sooner speak five words to the edification of the church, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.* 1 Cor. xiv. 19. For as he observes, an unintelligible teacher is a barbarian to the people, which made the apostle determine to use great plainness of speech. 2 Cor. iii. 12. And to be sure I have often felt the binding effects of legalizing the gospel myself, since I set out in the paths of wisdom; and have been entangled more than once by their legal ministry. Gal. v. 1.

But as for you, my brother, you have certainly great natural parts, a very strong memory, and have been very studious in the scriptures; this is plain, for you appear a ready scribe, well instructed in the law.

*Cusbi.* I believe men of the greatest natural parts in all the world, are at this time either deists or atheists. The greatest scholars are in the greatest confusion—the most studious men are the most ignorant of God—and those of the strongest memory are the most freighted with the rubbish of heathenism. The greatest natural logician is the farthest from the basis of sound reason; and he that is wisest in his own conceit, is the greatest enemy to the wisdom of God.

Natural abilities are the gift of God; and if they are not influenced by the Holy Ghost, they are always turned against the giver. But the spiritual man will own with Paul, that if a man be wise in divine mysteries, the word of wisdom is given him. If discerning, it is in divine light that he sees light. If stable in confidence, the word of faith is given him. If divinely knowing, the word of knowledge is given him. If strong in memory, it is the spirit that brings all things to his remembrance, whatsoever the Lord hath said unto him. All these things worketh that one, and the self-same spirit, dividing his gifts severally as he will. 1 Cor. xii. 11. God will never give the glory of his grace to men's brains, nor his praise to graven images. Isa. xlii. 8.

*Ahimaaz.* True, my brother; every good and every perfect gift cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, or shadow of turning. James i. 17. And every gracious man will acknowledge this to the honour of the great benefactor; for, as the prophet says, *let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, nor the mighty man in his might; nor the rich man in his riches. But let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me; that I am the Lord, which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth; for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.* Jer. ix. 24. And indeed I have always found the most pure liberty, the greatest love, and the greatest encouragement to confidence in God, ministered



ministered to my soul from such pure and evangelical conversation as yours. But I would wish to be led by the voice of my teachers, and so to steer between the two extremes. For my part, I am for the middle way.

*Cushi.* I do not rightly understand thee, my brother. If by way, you mean the way to God, the middle way is one of your own devising.—There are but two ways to heaven that God has devised; the one is by perfect, spiritual, and perpetual obedience, agreeable to the command.—*He that doth these things, even he shall live in them. If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.* The other way is, by faith in Christ, which Paul calls *the new and living way which God the Saviour hath consecrated through the veil; that is to say, his flesh.* Heb. x. 20.

These are the only two ways that lead to life, that are opened in the scriptures; therefore, he that devises a middle way, is in reality a despiser of both. If a man will enter into life by works, his righteousness must be a perfect conformity to the law. This must be his legal righteousness; and if perfect, it gives him a legal right. The gospel righteousness is one ready wrought out by the surety, and received by faith, both which must be brought from the law.

The pharisee, he sticks to the old covenant, and trusts in his own merit, being too proud to beg. The sensible sinner, he is humbled to re-

ceive the wedding garment, as the gift of God. The way to God, by faith in Christ, *Paul calls the new and living way*, to shew that the other is both dead and old; and indeed, it is a way that none but the Saviour ever went to God in.

The flaming sword has cut off all that ever attempted to touch the tree of life in that way.—*By the deeds of the law shall no flesh living be justified.* Therefore the middle way that my brother speaks of, is a way that was never cast up by any of the servants of God. The law says to all that are under the law, there is none righteous, no not one. God will never meet any sinner (as a reconciled God) in that way: *He meeteth none but those that rejoice, and work righteousness, and those that remember him in his way.* Isaiah lxiv. 5.

Never attempt an entrance where God has never opened a door; the end of such, according to Peter, will be worse than their beginning; for, as he says, it had been better for them not to have known the right way at all. The Father dwelleth in me, and I in him, says Christ; and Christ crucified is the only way to the Father. I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh to the Father, but by me.

The prophets and apostles laboured hard to clear and cast up this highway; and those that God guides into it, are to say, *Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way, take up the stumbling blocks out of the way of my people.* Isaiah lvii. 14. lxii. 10.

As

As thou hast received Christ Jesus, the Lord, so walk ye in him, and never aim at a middle path. God complains of this, and says, *My people have forgotten me; they have burned incense to vanity; and they have caused them to stumble in their ways from the ancient paths, to walk in paths in a way not cast up.* Jer. xviii. 15.

*Abimaaz.* You seem to be quite an original; that is, you are for the pure old apostolic religion, and for a perseverance in spiritual worship, in the naked simplicity and truth of the gospel; which is certainly right, and I believe that the main current of scripture runs in your channel.—Those who watch the Spirit's teaching, and compare it with the word of God, and who find the approbation of God with them, and the testimony of a good conscience, certainly walk the safest, and will find the most sensible support from the Almighty in a trying hour.

Your conversation is very spiritual, and very entertaining to me. It brings a deal of my past experience fresh to my mind; and, for my part, I know not when I have met with so agreeable a companion, nor when I have spent so comfortable an hour.

*Cushi.* It is to be lamented that there appears so little spiritual conversation among professing people. Heavenly conversation, cheerfully delivered, keeps the word of God alive in one's heart. It causes it to dwell richly there, in all

utterance, in all knowledge, and spiritual understanding. It stirs up the gift of God that is in a man; and the more such an one scattereth the truth, the more he increaseth his stock. Prov. xi. 24. So that the speaker is edified, as well as the hearer; for, as Solomon says, *he that watereth, shall be watered also himself.* Prov. xi. 25.

*Abimaaz.* True, my brother; but all the children of God have not that experience and judgment that you seem to be favoured with. There are many hoping souls that cannot find words to express a reason of their hope. They are bashful, timorous, and perplexed with many doubts and fears; and they are fearful of speaking wrong, or laying a presumptuous claim to that which they have no right to, as the tempter often suggests.

Besides, there are many professors who have more head-knowledge than heart-felt experience, and these often criticise and contradict the simple lisplings of a babe in grace; and when they have been served so a few times, they are like parrots, you cannot make them talk again.

*Cusbi.* That is what I never liked. I have often heard strange muddy language from a young Christian; but I never chose to stop his mouth if I found but the least favour with it; for although the great *I* is brought in at every sentence, as the chief agent, yet after they have had a few falls, I have observed that the great pronoun has been left quite out of the question, except it has appeared

peared in its proper place, in declaring what evil they have done, or what free grace has done for them. In this God fulfils his promise, *by turning to the people a pure language.* Zeph. iii. 9. Poor Peter lost the great *I* in Satan's sieve, and so do others; but as for criticising their words, and contradicting of them, it is very wrong. When weak believers have been served so, they will act with their tongue as a young child does with its feet; after they have deceived it once or twice, it will hang about the mother, and you cannot make it venture upon them again.

For my part, I am very fond of having a weak believer in company. He, and the poor sensible sinner, the diligent seeker, and the earnest inquirer, are the people that the old Christian finds the greatest liberty with, as may be seen in Ezekiel's ministry. He stands dumb before a carnal multitude of lifeless professors, without a word to say. *I will make thy tongue cleave to the roof of thy mouth, that thou shalt be dumb, and shalt not be to them a reprover.* Ezek. iii. 26.

But to the young believer, who had fled to the God of Israel for refuge, his tongue was loosed. *In that day shall thy mouth be opened to him which is escaped, and thou shalt speak and be no more dumb.*—Ezek. xxiv. 27.

Our great apostle boasted of this. *O ye Corinthians, our mouth is opened unto you—our heart is enlarged.* 2 Cor. vi. 11. But in Rome he found

his spirit chained, and his tongue fettered; and therefore he solicits an interest in the Ephesians' prayers for him, *that utterance might be given him—that he might open his mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which he was an ambassador in bonds, that therein he might speak boldly as he ought to speak.* Eph. vi. 19, 20.

*Abimaaz.* It is true, my brother; we generally find young believers the most thirsty after divine knowledge; and the most attentive to the lips of wisdom; and, as the prophet says, the priests' lips should preserve knowledge, that *inquiring souls may seek the law at his mouth.* Malachi ii. 7.—Yet you know they are not capable of holding up an argument, or carrying on spiritual conversation, which is the point that you are insisting upon.

*Cushi.* I would sooner be in company with a *young and a wise child, than with an old and foolish king, who will no more be admonished.* Eccl. iv. 13. Our Saviour's company consisted altogether of such weaklings; and one half of the parables left upon record, were drawn from the mouth of the Saviour by simple inquiry. By their asking him questions, they *drew water with joy out of that well of salvation.* Isa. xii. 3.

And I wish there was a little more of this in practice in our days. Many young Christians would be useful to old ones, by stirring up the well-spring of life in them; and would, at the same time, find  
their

their own bowels refreshed, by the spiritual counsel, advice, or instructions, which themselves might draw. The established Christian that has drunk into the Saviour's spirit, has a divine spring within him, which is often low for want of thirsty babes to draw it out. The Lord has promised, *that whosoever cometh unto him, and drinks, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water; if the weak believer would grow, let him draw.* John vii. 37, 38.

And on the other hand, an experienced minister, by being in company with young believers, and observing their questions and answers, gets a more satisfactory reason of the hope that is in them, than he can get at an appointed church meeting, for which they have prepared themselves by premeditation; and are often abashed and confounded by an audience.

*Abimaaz.* It is a great blessing to a young Christian to have an experienced pastor to attend on, in his doubtful state; for the impressions of God's laws on a sinner's heart, are as difficult to read, as the hand-writing on the wall of Belshazzar's palace. The king *trembled when he saw the fingers that wrote.* Dan. v. 5. And we tremble no less when we feel the *hand-writing that is against us.* Col. ii. 14. And he that becomes an *interpreter, as Elibu was to Job,* must have the spirit of God in him; for *it is the inspiration of the Almighty that must give him understanding.* Job xxxii. 8.

The

The queen of Babylon saw the need of this, when she perceived the emptiness and ignorance of the astrologers and Chaldeans. *There is a man, said she, in thy kingdom, in whom is the spirit of the holy gods* [implying that the spirit of unholy devils was in the others]; *and in the days of thy father light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him; whom the king Nebuchadnezzar thy father, the king, I say, thy father, made master of the magicians, astrologers, chaldeans, and soothsayers; for as much as an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and understanding, interpreting of dreams, and shewing of hard sentences, and dissolving of doubts, were found in the same Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar: now let Daniel be called, and he will shew the interpretation.* Dan. v. 11, 12.

This woman has drawn a most excellent portrait of a minister of the spirit; and as she found the need of such a spirit in her husband's confusion, so many foolish virgins, who now call inspiration enthusiasm, will, in the great and terrible day of the Lord, call for the same inspiration; *give us of your oil for our lamps are gone out.* Solomon, calls the divine impressions of God's laws, made by the spirit of God, deep waters.

*Cushi.* Yea, and when these deep waters are stirred by a spiritual conversation, they will spring up, and influence both the affections and the tongue of the speaker as they rise. *Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water; but a man of understanding*



*standing will draw it out.* Prov. xx. 5.—And as these waters are drawn forth, so they refresh, strengthen, purify, and comfort others that hear the conversation; as speaketh the wise man: *The words of a man's mouth are as deep waters; and the well-spring of wisdom as a flowing brook.* Prov. xviii. 4.—An experimental believer has always something to say, when young Christians ask him questions; for the *heart of the wise teacheth his mouth, and addeth learning to his lips.* Prov. xvi. 23.

*Abimaaz.* Indeed, my brother, I feel the blessed effects of what you assert on my own spirit, for I find my understanding much enlightened into the word of God, my heart is enlarged, my affections are warmed, my bowels are refreshed, and my judgment much established. For my part, I never met with so precious a companion before. Such conversation leaves no guilt on the conscience; it does not send one home with a secret sting, as has too often been the case with me, when I have left a company that had nothing to discourse about but worldly matters. I have felt the wretched effects of it afterwards in my closet, when I have come to face God in prayer; while on the other hand, divine converse furnishes the mind with a suitable frame for prayer and praise; and I think this is Solomon's meaning, when he says, *A man shall be satisfied with good by the fruit of his mouth.* Prov. xii. 14. But what would some think of this conversation of ours. I believe it would appear  
mere

mere nonsense to many of our learned masters of arts.

*Cushi.* As for master of arts, it appears to me an arrogant title. Professor of arts would sound much better; for there is a mystery in every art that has puzzled the best of them, and ever will. *Known unto God are all his works from the beginning.* He is the grand master of all; and in the strictest sense there is no other; because there are so many mysteries in every art that they are not masters of. Hence I have often thought that A. M. and M. A. have stood for two lies. The best art is divinity; and I believe this is one of the last that many young students are put to the study of. They must be filled with heathenism first; and if God calls them by grace, their heathen stock serves for fuel, into which the devil often throws his darts, by tempting them to atheism and deism. The man that knows God, and himself, is the happiest, the wisest, the most useful, and always will appear the brightest character in the world: for it is said that the king of Babylon communed with such, *and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; therefore stood they before the king: and in all matters of wisdom and understanding that the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm.* Dan. i. 19, 20.

The best botanist in the world is that man that can give the most saving description of the  
tree

tree of life, that blessed plant of renown. Ezek. xxxiv. 29. Job tells you the root of it was found in him. Job xix. 28. Paul says, the wild Gentiles were grafted into it, and partook of its fatness. Rom. xi. 19. John says, *the leaves of it are for the healing of the nations*;—compare Rev. xxii. 2. with Isaiah liii. 5. Ezekiel tells us, *the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine*. Ezek. xlvii. 12; and the spouse tells us its branches are for a shadow. Song, ii. 3. The Lord favour you and me with an heart-felt union with this tree, then shall our leaf never wither, nor shall we cease from yielding fruit: *He that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit*;—for without me ye can do nothing.

Indeed the Christian has something to do with various arts. He is an astronomer when he has found out the bright and morning star, Rev. xxii. 16, and sensibly felt it rise in his heart, 2 Peter i. 19. This blessed light is succeeded by the heat of the Sun of Righteousness shining on the soul *with healing in his beams*. Mal. iv. 2. The best star that ever the eastern sages found, was that which led them to Bethlehem, where the star of Jacob lay. Numb. xxiv. 17. We may say the same of all other arts. God make us such navigators as shall gain the haven of everlasting rest; and such geographers as shall find out the *new heaven and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness*.

*ousness.* Blessed be that philosopher that has found the pearl of great price; and for ever blessed be that anatomist that has crucified and dissected the old man with his affections and lusts. And is not that man the best prognosticator, that, from the testimony of a good conscience, can say with the Psalmist—*he shall guide me with his counsel, and receive me into glory*; if so, then I take it for granted that he also will be found to be the best builder at last, *who has heard the gospel and obeyed it; and, like a wise master-builder, has dug deep and founded his faith and hope on the rock of Israel; when the rains descend, and the winds blow, and the floods come and beat violently upon that house, it could not be moved, because it was founded upon a rock.* Luke vi. 48. All arts and sciences besides these, will be of little use in the day of judgment; and as they have a tendency to lift graceless men up with pride, and to set them above the pure and simple word of God, they are not worthy of the name of wisdom, as speaketh the prophet: *The wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken: lo, they have rejected the word of the Lord, and what wisdom is there in them?* Jer. viii. 9.

God, as the God of nature, hath given many excellent gifts and parts to men, though fallen. Beauty, wit, skill, and wonderful ingenuity, as may be seen in the writings of atheists, deists, and other heathens; but, without preventing-grace be given, they

they are sure to be exercised to the dishonour of the bountiful Giver. The greatest part of our university education consists in plundering the natural abilities of heathens. I have observed men, of acquired learning, who have discoursed with the sublimity of a Homer, yet at the same time seemed as destitute of natural and spiritual abilities as Peter the wild boy, who was found in the woods of Hanover. Such only shine in the natural abilities of others; and their borrowed language, from the native idiot, is as distinguishable as the parrot's note from the person's voice which it mimics; for, as the wise man saith, *excellent speech becometh not a fool.* Prov. xvii. 7.

*Abimaaz.* To be sure there are no acquirements like the pure gifts which flow from God, who is the giver of every good and of every perfect gift; and when God gives grace to sanctify a natural gift, then it is of great use;—*a man's gift maketh room for him, and bringeth him before great men.* Prov. xviii. 16. And certainly it is a great blessing to the church of God, while Christ, the stone of help, is the substance of the gift, and used in the awakening of sinners, and establishing of saints: *a gift is as a precious stone in the eyes of him that hath it; whithersoever it turneth it prospereth.* Prov. xvii. 8. And for my part I have read many volumes of learned and gracious men's nervous reasonings against error, and erroneous men; such as volumes of sermons to prove the being of a God,

the authenticity of the scriptures, the reasonableness of the Christian religion, &c. which I could never get either establishment or comfort from.

*Cusbi.* The volumes of sermons, and other treatises, that have been written to prove the being of a God, have brought many to doubt of such a being, where no doubt ever rose before about it. And as for proving the authenticity of scripture by scholastic reasoning, it is like lighting of a taper to find out the sun when he shines in his meridian. All systems of error that have ever been published are like Ahab's harness—there are always joints enough left open for the arrow of vengeance; the word of God is sufficient to marr every false system however compiled, and that God will let them know when he sweeps away the refuges of lies.

The natural propensity of a man to sin against the light of nature,—the guilt that he is perpetually stung with,—the fear of death and judgment that he is always in bondage to,—the checks that he feels before the commission of sin,—the violence that he is obliged to offer to his conscience afterwards,—the reflections that he often makes,—and the judgments that appear abroad in the earth, &c. &c. are quite sufficient, not only to prove the existence of God, but the cognizance that he daily takes both of them and their actions. And this is sufficient also to prove the authenticity of his word; for there is not a corruption that stirs in man's heart,

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—not a lascivious thought that roves on his mind;  
 —not a crime that he commits,—not a cogitation  
 that he feels,—nor a judgment that he fears, but  
 what are discovered by a divine ray in the secret  
 oracles, and flash many awful convictions on the  
 conscience of every transgressor. This shews the  
 law written in their heart; and if an appeal to God,  
 to scripture, to conscience, to creation, and to the  
 accomplishment of the prophecies, are not sufficient  
 to convince them, scholastic reasoning will hardly do  
 it. The man that will daringly deny the hourly  
 verdict of his thoughts, and the perpetual decision  
 of his own conscience, is more hardened than the  
 devil himself; for Satan never denied the conviction  
 that he felt, nor the vengeance he feared, in all  
 the outcry that he made in the days of our Lord's  
 ministry. There is not an erroneous man in all the  
 world but what fulfils some part or other of the  
 scriptures. God has promised to *send strong delu-*  
*sions that men may believe a lie*, and be damned  
 for rejecting the truth, and taking pleasure in un-  
 righteousness; therefore I think such desperate sin-  
 ners are not worth the notice of a divine; *they are*  
*subverted, and sin, being condemned of their own con-*  
*science*, Tit. iii. 11; and *to reprove such scorers, is*  
*to get one's self a blot*. Prov. ix. 7.

The Almighty, as the God of salvation, can  
 never be discovered in his gracious purposes but in  
 his own rays; as saith our blessed apostle, *For God,*  
*who commanded the light to shine out of darkness,*

*hath shined into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.* 2 Cor. iv. 6.

*Abimaaz.* My dear brother, I never felt my soul so sweetly entertained and established in my life, as I have by your conversation. I have often wished to know the mind and will of God in many of these particulars which you have mentioned; you are as Elihu was to Job, *according to my wish in God's stead*, Job xxxiii. 6; for I am like the two disconsolate disciples when the Saviour overtook them, and opened up, explained, and applied the Scriptures, till their hearts burned within them. And indeed if you had not spoken against the sufficiency of human learning, I should have thought you a professor of the languages, a doctor of divinity, a master of arts, a critical reviewer, an antiquarian, and a fellow of the royal society.

*Cusbi.* You may take me just as you please. I profess something of the language of Canaan; and I think he is the best doctor that is the most useful to souls; a sound divine is a professor of the best art; the man that knows truth from error is a valuable critic; he that has made his calling and election sure, is a good antiquarian; and he that is sound in faith, is a fellow of that society that is *divinely and eternally royal*. 1 Peter ii. 9. Rev. v. 10.

*Abimaaz.* I perceive thou art a man of humour, as well as a man of grace, and certainly have a competent



competent measure of natural abilities, as well as a profound experience; this I think appears plain to any observer; and as God has been pleased to send both into a ministerial channel, I believe they will appear much to his own honour, the good of his people, and to the confusion of the enemies of his cause.

*Cushi.* What I am, I am by creation and grace; you may discover me better than I can discover myself. But be assured of this, that there never were five pounds laid out upon me for human polishing since I have been in the world; nor is my deficiency in human learning any impediment in the way of usefulness. If God the Holy Ghost prepares a man's heart, and takes possession of it, he will create the fruit of the lip also, and give that man *a mouth and wisdom that all his adversaries shall never be able to gainsay or resist*. And for my part I have often thought that human learning has robbed God of one half of the glory that is due to him. I have read Cave's Lives of the Fathers till my heart has heaved at the work to see how the creature has been exalted. The leading account of every character is the piety of their ancestors; just as if grace was hereditary: secondly, their aptness to outstrip all others in human learning: thirdly, their mortifying their bodies in a cave; just as if the devil and the old man of sin was not to be found in a cave, as well as in a city. And as

for the Holy Ghost, he is hardly mentioned, though there is no such thing as *mortifying any one deed of the flesh* (to good purpose) *but through him*. Rom. viii. 13; and if grace be mentioned in that book, it is slightly touched just at the conclusion of a narrative.

Calamy's Life of Baxter is just such another rotten jumble of human excellency. The Holy Ghost is the regenerator, the renewer, and the ornamentor of every real Christian; and if he be not glorified by us, we shall surely be debased by him; *for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed*. 1 Sam. ii. 30; or, as the Saviour says, *he that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted*. Matt. xxiii. 13.

*Abimaaz*. It is right, certainly, that *God in all things should be glorified through Jesus Christ*. But allowances, my brother, must be made: some Christians have been drawn altogether by love, without any convictions at all; these, not feeling the plague of their hearts, nor the awful arrest of divine justice, will remain of a legal tincture, and their language is far from being pure. These are not properly evangelized,—they are not brought off from all confidence in the flesh, consequently they will not favour so sweet of the dear Redeemer as those who have been chased by the terrors of law and justice to embrace him as their only refuge, and lay hold of him as the only hope set before them.

*Cushi.*

*Cushi.* God is a free agent, and will work on his people as it pleaseth him; but to be converted without repentance,—to be born again without soul travail,—to be forgiven without being convinced we have nothing to pay,—to be healed without feeling our sickness,—and to be saved before we find ourselves lost—is a mystery to me, and must remain so.

That God often begins to allure a soul by gospel promises I do not deny; but such generally find travail, and sickness too, before they arrive at God's tabernacle, or dwell on his holy hill. I have observed some persons, who have had their sharpest struggles with law and conscience, even on their death beds; and the very pains of death have hastened the pains of their spiritual birth, so that the birth of their souls just preceded the death of their bodies;—such have gone to glory, full fraught with the cordials of divine consolation. This I think agrees with the gospel sense of this text: *But when the people of the land shall come before the Lord, in the solemn feasts, he that entereth in by the way of the north gate to worship, shall go out by the way of the south gate; and he that entereth by the way of the south gate, shall go forth by the way of the north gate; he shall not return by the way of the gate whereby he came in, but shall go forth over against it.* Ezek. xlv. 9. And although some, as you observe, are very legal, and favour too much of the flesh, yet I believe, if they belong to God,

that he will permit their fleshly confidence so often to deceive them, that they will be led to feel after him, who makes his strength perfect in our weakness; and as his blessed arm is made bare to them, they will be careful to speak to the honour of him whose power they feel; thus he *turns to the people a pure language.*

*Abimaaz.* I have formerly observed several things which you have mentioned; and while you have been speaking they have occurred fresh to my mind; but I have not been so strict an observer of the works of God, and of the blessed teachings of the Holy Spirit, as you have, which is both my sin and my loss; as speaketh the Psalmist, *Whofo is wise and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord,* Psalm cvii. 43; and the more the loving-kindness of the Lord is seen, the more is the faith of a believer increased and encouraged. And sometimes God permits an unbeliever to be forcibly struck with real convictions, while he beholds the visible hand of God in supporting and bringing his own children out of difficulties—as the Queen of Sheba was struck at Solomon's wisdom; their false hopes give way, and their language is like that of the Psalmist, *I had fainted unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.* Psalm xxvii. 13.

*Cuski.* The man that watches the dealings of God with him, both in providence and grace,  
he

he shall find the Lord's promise daily verified—  
*I will, says God, make all my goodness pass before thee.* Such watchful souls shall see many an obstacle removed, many a precious promise turned up, many an intricate providence made straight, many a knotty experience unriddled, many an enemy entangled in his own counsel, many a hint dropped for faith to catch, many a glorious beam to direct his steps, and many a sweet drop of divine consolation will be poured as an oil on his soul, which will dissolve the stubborn heart, and divinely sweeten and soften every unruly faculty: *Thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord, and with favour will he compass him as with a shield.*

The penitential moan of Adam, as pathetic Milton paints it, is worth the notice of every tender-hearted Christian:

This most afflicts me, that departing hence,  
 As from his face I shall be hid, depriv'd  
 His blessed count'nance; here I could frequent  
 With worship place by place where he vouchsaf'd  
 Presence divine, and to my sons relate  
 On this mount he appear'd, under this tree  
 Stood visible, among these pines his voice  
 I heard, here with him at this fountain talk'd:  
 So many grateful altars I would rear  
 Of grassy turf, and pile up every stone  
 Of lustre from the brook, in memory,  
 Or monument to ages, and thereon  
 Offer sweet-smelling gums, and fruits, and flowers.  
 In yonder nether world where shall I seek

His bright appearances, or footsteps trace ?  
 For though I fled him angry, yet recall'd  
 To life prolong'd and promis'd race, I now  
 Gladly behold though but his utmost skirts  
 Of glory, and far off his steps adore.

The answer is as sweet as the other is moving :

—Doubt not but in valley and in plain  
 God is as here, and will be found alike  
 Present, and of his presence many a sign  
 Still following thee, still compassing thee round  
 With goodness and paternal love, his face  
 Express, and of his steps the track divine.

*Abimaaz.* Certainly a man cannot live in the fear of God, unless he doth consider himself daily in the immediate presence of him; and to feel his supporting hand, to enjoy the testimony of his Spirit, to find his approbation with one, and his power manifested in leading one on, and holding one up in the face of all opposition, enables a man to rejoice, and say with the Psalmist, *the Lord is on my side, I will not fear what man can do unto me.* And I have often thought that God has, and still doth, reveal himself by his Spirit to many souls in the world who have not the word of God preached to them by men; or, in other words, who have not the means of grace as we have; and I have at times got comfort from these thoughts with respect to the poor heathens.

*Cushi.* As I observed before, God is a free agent; but I do not desire to be wise above  
 what

what is written. I have read the prophecies of the ten Sibyls, and certainly there is a deal of truth in them, though it be sung with wild notes; and if they are allowed to be prophetesses of the Lord, they are witnesses in your favour. But our great Apostle doth not countenance you at all: *It is written, saith he, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved; how then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed; and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard; and how shall they hear without a preacher, and how shall they preach except they be sent?* Rom. x. 14; and Christ says, *Preach the gospel to every creature, and he that believes shall be saved, and he that believes not shall be damned,* Mark xvi. 16, 17; and again, *This gospel must be preached in all the world for a witness, and then shall the end come.* Matt. xxiv. 14. I believe, if you and I were to travel throughout the heathen world, where they are destitute of the word of God, we should never be able to find a soul converted to Christ; nor do I read that Paul found one in all his travels.

*Abimaaz.* I think, in some things, thou art rather too contracted, my brother; for my part, I would wish ever to possess an open and catholic spirit. I have observed many things in thy conversation that discover an unbecoming narrowness. Paul tells us that we *should not be straitened in our bowels*: and he speaks unto us, as to his children, *that we should be enlarged.* 2 Cor. vi.

vi. 12, 13. It was a sweet spirit that God gave Solomon; it is said that *he gave him enlargement of heart as the sand that is upon the sea shore.* 1 Kings, iv. 29. And this is what that eminent saint of God (I mean Jabez) prayed for; it was, *that God would bless him indeed, and enlarge his coast,* 1 Chron. iv. 10; and I hope God will favour thee with the same, my brother, for indeed a narrow, contracted, bigoted spirit is a very bad one.

*Cushi.* I am much obliged to thee, but there are several expressions of yours which I object to. I have often thought that Moses himself, if he was upon earth in our day, would be accused of a narrow spirit; for he declares to an audience of six hundred thousand souls, *Ye have seen all that the Lord did before your eyes in the land of Egypt unto Pharaoh, and unto all his servants, and unto all his land; the great temptations which thine eyes have seen—the signs and those great miracles; yet the Lord hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day. And I have led you forty years in the wilderness.* Deut. xxix. 2, 3, 4, 5. This part of Moses's doctrine would be censured in the present day as the effects of a contracted spirit; and certainly it differed much from the universal spirit of Corah, Abiram, and Dathan; for though Moses declared Israel to be blind, ignorant, and insensible, yet they declared them all sanctified, and in the presence of God, and warmly



warmly rebuked the bigotry of Moses and Aaron: *For they gathered themselves together against Moses, and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy every one of them, and the Lord is among them; wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?* Numb. xvi. 3. The contracted sermon of Moses, and the declaration of this catholic company, differ widely. 'Moses declares them blind and insensible,—these declare them all holy, and God's presence among them; but it happened with them according to the wise man's saying, *There is a just man* (as they supposed themselves to be) *that perisheth in his righteousness; and there is a wicked man* (as they supposed Moses) *that longeth his life in his wickedness.* Eccl. vii. 15; and so it happened here—for Moses outlived Corah and all his company. They perished from the congregation with all their candour,—they went into the pit alive with all that they had; while Moses, with all his contracted spirit, died at the mouth of the Almighty; or as it might be rendered, without offering any violence to the text, that *God kissed him to death.*

Jesus Christ himself was viewed as one of a contracted spirit, when he told the Nazarenes *that many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, but to none of them was Elias sent but to Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow: And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet,*

*prophet, and none of them were cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian.* These sovereign and discriminating acts of God appeared to the Saviour's audience as the effects of a contracted spirit, and therefore they were determined to break his neck: *And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, and rose up and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill (whereon their city was built) that they might cast him down headlong.* Luke iv. 25—29. But the Scribes and Pharisees were of a more catholic spirit; for they excommunicated none unless he confessed the true faith of Christ: *For the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue.* John ix. 21. Nor did the Pharisees presume to anathematise any but the real elect of God—*this people that know not the law are cursed.* John vii. 49. You see these open catholic clergy admitted all to their communion, but the Saviour and his few chosen followers. So the devil had full possession of the synagogues, while the rulers and scribes defended their fire, and stuck to his counsel: *Have any of the rulers believed on him?* John vii. 48. No, they adhered to their own progenitor; and it was not without cause that the Saviour said unto them, *Ye are of your father the devil, and the lust of your father ye will do.* John viii. 44.

*Akimaaz.* You are got quite into irony, my brother; there was no call for such a tart reply.

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I only meant that Christians should judge charitably, and not entertain too contracted an opinion of a very few being saved; and by an open and catholic spirit, I mean, that we should love all ranks of professing people, though they differ from us in doctrines and worship; we should spread a mantle of love over their errors, where we have reason to believe that the root of the matter is in them.

*Cushi.* I desire to love all *that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth.* This is the love that Paul possessed; he loved all that loved our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth; and if they love Christ sincerely, the root of the matter is in them; and if they love him in truth, then they will not differ from us in doctrine. That soul that loves Christ in truth, will not stand in need of thy mantle to cover his errors, for love is the root of all real evangelical obedience; while, on the other hand, enmity is the root of all rebellion: and although a young believer cannot see eye to eye with an old one, yet he will not fight against any truth that is brought from the word of God; love will produce the obedience of faith—*charity believeth all things.* The soul that opposes any plain truth does not love Christ in truth, nor does he love him in sincerity, because he is not obedient. The new creation is full as uniform as the old; God did not send man into the world to walk about without a head, nor does he create a soul  
anew

anew without giving him an understanding:—*We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding.* 1 John v. 20. God has not only promised the spirit of love, but he has promised the spirit of a sound mind also. I have heard people talk of persons being evangelists in heart, though legal in judgment; but Christ tells us that we are to know the heart by that which proceeds from it;—if so, an erroneous judgment proves a rotten heart.

My reason for answering thee so sharply is, because I have heard so much of late about an open catholic spirit, that it seems to be a cant word, that stands for any thing or nothing. We have many in our days who seem to be very open in their sermons, crying out, “Come all, Jesus stands with open arms to receive you,—roll yourselves upon him:—my soul for yours if he casts you out.” And yet these men, that preach this universal gospel, are so incensed at the cordial reception of a returning prodigal, that they would rob him of his kid, and stop his mouth from declaring what God has done for his soul. I am a living witness of this truth, and so are thousands more. Their resentment has run so high, that the intertreaties of the Father of all Mercies is not sufficient to bring them into an acquiescence with his sovereign display of discriminating grace. It appears as if they would have been better pleased  
if

if he had perished in his own deceivings, than they are at the Father's receiving him safe and sound.

Now Moses was of a different spirit from these; for although his doctrine was nothing like theirs in latitude, yet his heart was as wide as their sermons. When a young man ran and told Moses, saying, *Eldad and Medad do prophesy in the camps, and Joshua said, My lord Moses, forbid them*; his open reply is, *Enviest thou for my sake? I would to God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that he would put his spirit upon them.* Numb. xi. 27, 28, 29. If this be an open spirit in reality, how little of it have they got who will load a sound testimony with scandal, and use their utmost endeavour to hinder the usefulness of those that God is pleased to send into the church.

The bible will hardly furnish us with a minister (who pretends to preach Christ) of such a spirit as this, except it be Diotrephes; and God says nothing in his favour. *I wrote unto the church (said John): but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words; and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church.* 3 John, 9. 10. This man is one of a catholic spirit; he kept  
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John himself out of the pulpit,—he forbid his epistles being read to the congregation,—he would admit no labourer that John sent into his pulpit, and those that would have let them preach in their houses, he forbid also; and if they disputed his usurped authority, he excommunicated them; or, as the text saith, he cast them out of the church. This man was a lord over God's heritage; and this wretched spirit is cherished too much in our days.

For my part I wish never to hear the word catholic again. It is a word that, I believe, was coined in Egypt at the time of the dispute between that dreadful monster Arius, the grandfather of our present Arians, and Athanasius, whom God raised up to oppose him. The cause of Satan against Christ, carried on by Arius, was called the Arian cause, or the Arian faith; while, on the other hand, the cause of truth, pleaded by Athanasius, by way of distinction, was called the Catholic cause, or Catholic faith; so that those souls that enjoyed the Father's love, the Saviour's atonement, and the Holy Ghost's testimony in their souls, were styled people of the catholic faith; while those that ridiculed and abused the Lord Jesus Christ, declaring him a mere creature, were called Arians, being the recipients of his damnable heresy, as the Holy Ghost styles it, 2 Pet. ii. 1.

While the true faith flourished at Rome, those  
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believers that were of that city were stiled Roman Catholics; but as they have now exalted a Pope, in opposition to Christ, and have cast out his word, and introduced their own superstitious vanities instead of it, and yet appropriate the name catholic to themselves, it is now big with nothing but mischief; for he is deemed the best catholic that opposes truth, kills the saints, and burns the bible; therefore it is high time to drop the word, and bring in those that are better understood, and that are of a more antient date; such as, *saints, believers, children of God, disciples of Christ, partaker of the Spirit, the household of faith, &c.* are terms that have a better meaning than a catholic man, catholic spirit, and catholic church. Let us be no longer plunderers of the whore of Babylon;—let her names go with her relics, merit, and all the rest of her trumpery, and let us say, Good rid of bad rubbish.

*Abimaaz.* I find you are no friend to the Roman Catholics, and yet you are beholden to them; for your Common Prayer Books were entirely of their composing, only our reformers purged out some few popish dregs—such as praying to saints and angels, &c. &c. And you know we have many good and able ministers of Jesus Christ, who exalt its excellency publicly above all extempore prayer; and others, who were not in the establishment when they took on them the ministry, are taking the form with them, even at the risk of the bishop's

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displeasure;

displeasure ; yea, and some have spent hundreds, if not thousands of pounds at law, in order to secure the use of it. What do you think of this ?

*Cushi.* Suppose I was to go to-morrow into a town where the gospel had never been preached, and where there was not a soul to be found that was converted to Christ, and I should preach from this text, *Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his*, Rom. viii. 9 ; and I was to declare, first, the insufficiency of a form of godliness without the power ; secondly, the necessity of regeneration ; thirdly, shew the operations of the Spirit from the word of God ; fourthly, that God seeketh spiritual worshippers ; and lastly prove, that the Holy Ghost is sufficient to work faith, to sanctify the soul, and prepare it for the reception of Christ ; and sufficient also to lead the believer on in a course of spiritual devotion, as the spirit of grace and of supplication ; and four souls, under this discourse, should be convinced of the insufficiency of their formality ; should you not think that I had acted the faithful part in handling the above text in that manner ? and that God had approved of it by four persons being convinced under it ?

*Abimaaz.* I should think that you had taken the best step that could be taken to undermine their sandy foundation, and to shew them the necessity of being made new creatures in Christ ; and I am fully persuaded that God's word would bear you out.

*Cushi.*



*Cusbi.* Then suppose there should come a gospel minister the week following into the church, and he should preach up the excellency of the form, cast a few reflections on dissenters, and speak lightly of extempore prayer, and settle these four convinced souls on their old bottom again, would he not *build up that which I had destroyed*? Gal. ii. 18; and if so, who would be the transgressor?

*Abimaaz.* Certainly he would.

*Cusbi.* Then you have decided this matter. And I believe there are many in our days, who are destitute of grace, bitterly prejudiced against many ministers that God has sent, who preach and pray as the Spirit gives them utterance, who hear the gospel, but place all their hopes in the form. And when these unleavened formalists hear a gospel minister cry up the excellency of the form, and ridicule spiritual petitions, their self-righteous souls are fed with the venom of asps; their native prejudice against pious dissenters is fixed the firmer, and they are wickedly and deceitfully established on the old basis of depraved nature;—this is no part of the work of an evangelist.

*Abimaaz.* Do you think, my brother, that ever the Lord Jesus set their own souls at liberty in answer to the form of prayer? One would think that he had, as they speak so highly of it, and so lightly of extempore prayer.

*Cusbi.* No; God permits none to prevail with him, but those who by the Spirit's intercession pour

out their souls before him in faith, under a sense of want, and in a language expressive of their own troubles. And I will be bold to say, that if my brother could be in the study of these good men on some Saturday evening, or Sunday morning, when their bible is as a sealed book, Satan buffeting them, their mind confused, their judgments bewildered, a congregation gathering together, and no text opened to them, no thoughts springing up, altogether unfurnished for the pulpit,—he would then see them upon their knees before God at hard work, without any service-book in their hands; he would hear their groaning petitions,—see their tears,—and be convinced that the whole business was carried on between God and their own souls by those very extempore prayers which they publicly speak so lightly of.

*Abimaaz.* If this be the case, we must act with good men's bigotry as the Saviour bids us do with bad men's precepts; he tells us, *not to do as the Pharisees do, but to do as they say*; but here we must not do (in this matter) as these good men say, but as they do.

*Cushi.* If you do so, you will do right;—for if the supplications of the Holy Spirit will not prevail with God, no human compositions can.

*Abimaaz.* I believe there was at one time near two thousand ministers of the gospel in this country that exposed themselves to many hardships for their non-conformity to the Common Prayer; which at  
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times has led me to think very lightly of their sufferings; since I have heard many good men who preach the same doctrine that they did, and yet contend for, and highly extol, the very things that their consciences could never conform to. I have thought that their non-conformity was the effect of a stubborn and rebellious spirit, and their sufferings were only in defence of a blind and misled conscience. This must be the case of those non-conformists, or our present advocates for the form must be in the wrong, one of it; and I confess your present conversation about it has brought it as a puzzling matter of debate afresh to my mind; and for my part I am not able to decide it.

*Cushi.* It is true, there were great numbers that suffered hunger, cold, and nakedness; moreover bonds and imprisonments; yea, and even death itself, rather than conform to the rules of the Common Prayer Book. And if they did it in defence of a blind or misled conscience, we may say of their sufferings as David said of the death of Saul's general—*died Abner as a fool dieth.* 2 Sam. iii. 33. Yet I think it is easy to decide the matter between the antient non-conformists and our present advocates; the non-conformists had the whole word of God on their side, but the others have not.

It is a blessed thing that men have no dominion over our faith, and that our faith is to stand in God's power, not in man's wisdom; but he that attempts to establish my faith on a human form,

endeavours to settle it in the wisdom of men, instead of the power of God. Faith is the gift of God the Father,—a grace from God the Saviour's fulness,—and is wrought in man by the operation of God the Holy Ghost; and in the promised aid of God, and in the powerful operations of Father, Son, and Spirit, it must stand, and nowhere else.

I know there are many venerable and valuable characters, whom God has called to the ministry since their first ignorant attempt to qualify themselves for it at a university; and in that sphere they will shine, while they abide with God, wherein they were called; but as the current of scripture does not flow in that channel, and as their souls were not delivered in answer to that form, and as they make use of extempore prayer in their families, and between God and their own souls, I think they might forbear their public reflections on those prayers which have done so much for them.

*Abimaaz.* Pray, my dear brother, what may I call thy name?

*Cushi.* My name is Cushi.

*Abimaaz.* Of what country, pray?

*Cushi.* I am an Israelite; and, blessed be God, through his rich grace I hope I am an Israelite indeed.

*Abimaaz.* That I firmly believe; for flesh and blood could never reveal the things unto thee that I have heard from thee; surely the lips of knowledge are a precious jewel; and the light  
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and favour that my soul has felt under thy conversation is an additional proof of it—for the excellency and the power of religion is all of God. I wish my brother would relate a little of the dealings of God with him; I should be all attention—my heart is sweetly becalmed—my seat is pure easy; I do not believe that I should be tired if I was to sit here all night; nor do I believe that I should feel the want of food;—my very body has lost its appetite since my soul has been at this banquet.

*Cushi.* I can hardly help laughing at thee, my brother, for thou sayest I could sit all night, when we have done that already; it was twelve o'clock yesterday when we met under this tree, and now it wants half an hour of the same—we have sat just twenty-three hours and a half;—surely, if some people were to hear thee, they would say as the giddy multitude did of Peter and John, *that they were full of new wine.* As for thy body having lost its appetite is no wonder; the body and soul are closely united, and both interested in the covenant of grace. If the soul is burdened, the countenance of the body will proclaim it; the knees will tremble under its burden, and the whole animal frame will feel the effects of it. But, on the other hand, if the soul be enrapt in the vision of faith, as Paul was, it is so forgotten that the soul cannot relate whether the body was in the company or not; and

when the soul is indulged with the smiles of God, the body will forget both its wants and its infirmities, as Elijah did when his body fasted forty days, after the angels had entertained him under the juniper tree ; or like Abraham, who, at almost an hundred years old, ran to the tent and ordered an entertainment for the best guest that ever visited the world.

David certainly had some meaning when he said, *My heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God*, Psalm lxxxiv. 2 ; and, on the other hand, the terrors of God on his soul made *the beauty of his body to consume away like a moth*. Psalm xxxix. 11. But I shall proceed to give my dear brother some account of the dealings of God with me, and I shall do it with pleasure ; for I never find my spirit more in its element than when, like David, I am telling others who fear God, *what he hath done for my soul*, Psalm lxvi. 16. And indeed I think this is doing the work of an evangelist, much more than relating what we have done for God.

In my younger days I was one of a melancholy turn of mind, and was kept in perpetual bondage through the fear of death ; and at certain seasons I was rather devotional, after the manner of the Jews, but very ignorant of the nature and being of Jehovah. Nor did I ever rightly consider his omnipresence, his universal providence, his care for, nor his government of the world, until the

the great stir was made in Israel about David, the son of Jesse, killing the Goliath of Gath. The report of that wonderful act forcibly struck me; the thoughts of his formidable and panoplied antagonist, and the unarmed stripling (I mean David) going against him with no other armour than faith in God, whom he so often styles the shield of his help; surely, he was clad with zeal for the Lord God of Israel, as with a cloak. His bold declaration to his formidable adversary, and the wonderful event that justified his confident prediction, wrought wonderfully upon me, and effectually brought me to believe, *verily that there is a God that judgeth in the earth.*

From that time I was led to watch narrowly the hand of God with that eminent man; and in my heart said, as Ruth did to Naomi, *Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.* I saw him in so blessed a state, and so visibly defended and upheld by the Almighty, that at times I was provoked to jealousy, and secretly envied him his happiness, yet would have given all the world for a part or lot in David's God, whom he so often styles the portion of his soul.

*Abimaaz.* You bring many things to my mind;—but to break in upon your warm conversation would extinguish the glowing fervour of your spirit; go on, my brother, I am all attention.

*Cushi.* I soon heard of Saul's hatred to David,  
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of his cruel jealousy, and of his attempting to kill him ; and some, who were very much attached to Saul, represented David in a bad light, and took the part of Saul as one appointed, anointed, and set up by God himself to be king over Israel. These things at times staggered me ; and David's killing the Philistines, and scalping three hundred of them, in order to obtain Saul's daughter for his wife, was very puzzling to me. But I still observed that the protecting and delivering hand of God was evidently with him.

Jonathan, who I believe was a good man, his tender regard for David, his espousing his cause, and exposing himself to all the rage and malice of his father, and loving him as his own soul, often brought me to believe that there was a divine union between them ; and indeed before ever I obtained boldness to speak to the sweet Psalmist of Israel, I felt something of the same blessed unction on my own soul. One thing greatly confounded me, and that was David's going down to the cave of Adullam, and appearing at the head of such a set of vagrants ;—*for all that were in distress, and all that were in debt, and all that were discontented, they gathered themselves unto him, and he became a captain over them.* 1 Sam. xxii. 2. This I could not easily get over, that such a set of men should join themselves to him ; and that a favourite of heaven should put himself as commander in chief at the head of such a ragged regiment.

But



But when Saul's awful apostasy from God was made known, of his seeking to the witch of Endor for relief and counsel, of the hand of God that went out against him, of the miserable end that he made, together with the wonderful deliverances that God wrought for David, of Samuel's attachment to him, of the best of saints loving him, and of the almighty power of God that levelled all his enemies, and exalted him on the throne of Israel, in spite of all opposition, I was so confirmed in the faithfulness and truth of David's God, that an invisible power led me to one greater than David; and a sudden thought struck me that David was an eminent type of the much desired and long looked for Messiah, who is the only sovereign of Israel, David's son, and David's Lord.

This divine dictator led my mind forth to traverse David's life and conduct, as representing the life of one greater; and from that time I traced all up to David's antetype, and there my misconstructions were rectified, and all my doubts resolved.

I considered, first, his descent from a low family, his mean calling as a shepherd, his *ruddy countenance*, 1 Sam. xvi. 12; his being *but a stripling*, xvii. 56; and his slender legs, Psalm cxlviii. 10; all typical of him that was so long foretold, who was to be *fairer than the children of men*, Psalm xlv. 2, and called the woman's seed. David's effeminate appearance,

appearance, and masculine exploits, led me to contemplate perpetually on the mighty deeds that were to be performed in future, by one whose appearance would be altogether as unheroic as that of David's. David's killing the Philistines to obtain a wife, led me to consider what the promised Messiah had done when he gave Egypt for our ransom; and what he would do in future in behalf of this spouse, when *the wicked shall be a ransom for the righteous, and the transgressors for the upright.* Prov. xxi. 18.

*Abimaaz.* But you know that Saul's daughter was not a gracious woman; she was taken away from David, and given to another, and how could she be a type of the spouse of Christ?—besides, it is said that she despised him, and was smitten with barrenness for it.

*Cushi.* All this is true; yet Michal *was bone of David's bone, and flesh of his flesh, by marriage*; but she never knew David's Lord, nor was she a partaker of David's sure mercies; yet she was, in my opinion, a type.

By virtue of the union between the godhead and manhood of Christ, which took place at his incarnation, the bond-woman (I mean the whole body of professors who are under the law) may say, that Christ is flesh of their flesh, and bone of their bone, for he was born of a woman, and born under the law. And indeed on this account the bond-woman is called a *divorced wife*,

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Jer. iii. 8. and judged of God as one that has *broken wedlock*, Ezek. xvi. 38, and therefore put away, according to their legal covenant that allows a divorce, which Israel never rightly considered; and therefore, being espoused only by the covenant of works, their marriage covenant was conditional, they broke wedlock, were divorced and put away: and, as the bond-woman was not included in the covenant of grace, the legal covenant, for want of their obedience, afforded them no more claim on the Lord as an husband. But the elect are not betrothed to the Saviour by the law of works, but they are betrothed to him *in loving-kindness, in mercies, and that for ever*, Hosea ii. 19. Thus the real church is not only bone of his bone, by virtue of his incarnation, but is made of one spirit with him by regeneration; *for two (saith God) shall be one flesh, but he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit*, 1 Cor. vi. 16, 17. Thus Saul's daughter was a type of a false church, though not of a true one; and her being joined to another man shews the apostasy of false professors; and as she was taken from David, so God takes away every fruitless professor—*every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away*, and if they continue until to the last day in their professions it matters not. The foolish virgins were shut out of the marriage chamber—none will enter with the bridegroom into the wedding

ding but those that have oil in their vessel, or the Spirit of Christ in their hearts. Matt. xxv.

I considered the poor distressed troop that went to the cave of Adullam, as prefiguring the poor sensible distressed sinners who become the followers of Jesus Christ. Those that are discontented with the world and sin, are glad to find contentment in a Saviour; and those that are in distress on account of fear and bondage, are glad to find relief in their God; and all that are sensible of their debts are thankful for a surety. And, to be plain, I found myself in a spiritual sense one of this number, and was by an invisible power led to follow David's antitype as such.

*Abimaaz.* I beg pardon, my brother, for breaking into your discourse, but I find my heart warmed, and my mind much enlightened by what you say, therefore I hope you will excuse me.—Pray what do you think of David's covenant with Abigail when she met him; and of his marriage with her? She seemed to be one after his own heart, both as a sensible woman and as a saint of God. She prophesied to David, and spiritualized her husband's name, and applies it to his nature.—*Let not my lord, I pray thee, regard this man of Belial, even Nabal; for as his name is, so is he; Nabal is his name, and folly is with him.* 1 Sam. xxv. 25. Do offer me your thoughts upon that circumstance; for I evidently see that there is a spiritual vein of  
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choice gospel that runs through the whole body of divine revelation.

*Cushi.* There certainly is; but in running of parallels between the types and the antitypes, the types always come short, and are but faint representations of what is represented by them. What was Esau's birth-right when compared to that which it signified; and what is David when compared to the fruit of his body, and his Lord who was to set upon his throne?

*Abimaaz.* True, my brother; yet we may entertain ourselves, and open our own thoughts to each other on the word of God, without offending the Almighty Saviour, for he bids us *search the scriptures*; and says, *they testify of him*. I believe the Bible to be like its Author; God is a spirit, and his word is spiritual; for *it is given by inspiration of God*; and to handle it spiritually proves a spiritual discernment, and makes it a spiritual entertainment for the souls of believers, whom Paul calls spiritual.—*But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.* 1 Cor. ii. 15. Hosea ix. 7.

*Cushi.* To legalize the word of God to a heaven-born soul, is the way to obscure his evidences, and bring him into bondage whom the Lord hath *made free*. John viii. 36. The man that does this is *a minister of the letter—not of the Spirit*. 2 Cor. iii. 6. Such a preacher is disobedient to the divine command. God says, *Do*  
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*the work of an evangelist, 2 Tim. iv. 5; and the believer who is deprived of his freedom by him is disobedient also; for the Spirit says, Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made you free, and be not again entangled with the yoke of bondage. Gal. v. 1.*

I considered Abigail's coming to David as prefiguring every elected soul that God brings to his dear Son. *No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him. John vi. 44.* Christ, in the character of a bridegroom, receives such into spiritual union with himself, and holds them fast in the bond of everlasting love for ever; *I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. John xiv. 20.* Thus the Lord receives the souls that his father draws to him as his own beloved bride—*He that hath the bride is bridegroom. John iii. 29.* Abigail came to David with spiritual language and prophecy in her mouth, and expressed a spiritual union with him, a love to him, and predicts his safety on earth, and his eternal existence in the favour of God; and I believe she foresaw that herself was to be his wife.

Observe, first, she comes to David, as all sinners do to Christ, with a prayer in her mouth—*I pray thee forgive the trespasss of thine handmaid.* Secondly, she comes with a full persuasion of the establishment and safety of David's house,—*For the Lord will certainly make my lord a sure house.*

*house.* So comes the sinner by faith to Christ; being persuaded there is security in his house, and no where else; and the Saviour is called David, Ezek. xxxvii. 25; and his church is called the *house of David* to this day; Zech. xii. 10. Thirdly, she assigns a reason for this; *because my lord fighteth the battles of the Lord*, even as Christ overcame the world: *Yet a man is risen up to pursue thee, and to seek thy soul*,—as Judas and the Pharisees did the Saviour's. *But the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with the Lord thy God*—as representing the union between the Saviour's human nature and his godhead. *And the souls of thine enemies, them shall he sling out as out of the middle of a sling*;—as the Saviour will one day cast away the enemies of his cross.

Thus she came to David with spiritual language; and *every one that hath learned of the Father cometh unto me* (says Christ). *Rabbi, thou art the son of God, thou art the king of Israel* (saith Nathaniel). *Thou art Christ the Son of God* (says Peter). *Flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee* (says the Saviour), *but my Father which is in heaven.* Abigail now concludes with a persuasion of the king's exaltation, and a petition in her own favour: *And it shall come to pass, when the Lord shall have done to my lord according to all the good that he hath spoken concerning thee, and shall have appointed thee ruler over Israel*; as Christ was to be afterwards *upon the throne of David*, to

*order it and establish it with justice and judgment for ever, Isaiah ix. 7 ; but when the Lord shall have dealt well with my lord, then remember thine handmaid: as the poor thief upon the cross said unto the Saviour, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.* The answer that Abigail got contains a blessing on the Lord for his goodness, a blessing on Abigail whom the Lord had sent, and a cordial acceptance of her person : *And David said to Abigail, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which sent thee this day to me ; and blessed be thou, which hast kept me this day from coming to shed blood, and from avenging myself with my own hand.* So David received of her hand that which she had brought him, and said unto her, *Go up in peace to thine house ; see, I have hearkened to thy voice, and accepted thy person.* 1 Sam. xxv. 35. These blessings may typify the blessings the Lord gave on the mount. David's not avenging himself, shews how the Saviour left his Father to take away Judas, and every other branch in him that beareth not fruit ; and thirdly, it shews the prevalent intercession which believing souls make for the wicked ;—as Abraham's intercession for Lot and the inhabitants of Sodom was a staying of the Lord's hand, for a time, from the four cities of the plain ; and as Abigail's intercession kept the sword of David from Nabal and all his house.

*Abimaaz.* It is said of Abigail, that she was a woman of good understanding, and of a beautiful countenance ;



*countenance ; but the man was churlish and evil in his doings.* 1 Sam. xxv. 3. I wonder that a gracious woman should submit to be so *unequally yoked together with an unbeliever* ; and especially with such an evil churl as he was.

*Cushi.* We are all as closely wedded to the law, as a covenant of works, as she was to Nabal ; and the law is as churlish as ever Nabal was ; for it not only threatens us with the anger of God, but with hell also ; hence it is said to be an *adversary*, Luke xii. 58, and *against us*, Col. ii. 14. And as Abigail was barren to Nabal, so is the sinner to God under the law ; but when Nabal was dead, then she married David. So when we see the law to be a *killing letter*, and that it cannot give life or fruitfulness, Gal. iii. 21, then we may go and be espoused to the spiritual David, who is to be a *prince for ever*, Ezek. xxxvii. 25, as Abigail was to typical David. Paul is very plain upon this : *Know ye not, brethren (for I speak to them that know the law), how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth ? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth ; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband ; so then, if while her husband liveth she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress ; but if her husband be dead she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress though she be married to another man. Wherefore, my brethren,*

*ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. Rom. vii. 1, 2, 3, 4.*

*Abimaaz.* David certainly was a most eminent type of the Messiah; and blessed be God I can see a deal of choice gospel matter and experience where I never expected to find any; and I find that the humble approach of Abigail to David, her intercession for her household, her humble petition for herself, her free-will offering to feed his followers, and her earnest desire of being remembered in future by him, tallies with my own experience; for I could have *put my mouth in the dust, if so be there might be hope for me in the dear Redeemer. Lam. iii. 29.* And I wrestled hard with the Lord for my friends also, as she did for hers; and as for the followers of Christ, I took pleasure in relieving them when I could; and, like unto her, I then begged, and still beg to be remembered in future by the Lord; and I am sure I have often obtained as sweet an answer from David's Lord, as she did from David; and some of the same words in it, *Go in peace, I have accepted thee*, has often been a sensible answer to my prayers.

If David was so sweet a type of the Messiah, then his ambassadors, that he sent to *great Nabal in his name*, must be typical of the ambassadors of Christ; for they said to Nabal, *Peace be unto all that thou hast.* And this agrees with the Saviour's message

message sent by his ambassadors: *Into whatsoever house you enter, say, Peace be to this house; and if the Son of Peace be there, your peace shall come upon it, and there abide, eating and drinking such things as are set before you.* Luke x. 5, 6, 7. What do you think of this? do not you think it is right? for they were to carry peace from David, and receive victuals from Nabal, but he gave them none.

*Cushi.* I think you are very right; and they fared just as many of the Lord's ambassadors do in our days; they neither receive their message, nor afford them relief, but impiously rail on them as Nabal did, asking, *Who is David? shall I give my victuals unto men whom I know not whence they be?* Thus he sent the ambassadors away, both empty and ashamed. But what was the consequence? why you see that the message of peace was received by a daughter of peace, namely Abigail; and the sword was drawn against every male in all the house, 1 Sam. xxv. 13. 22. And though, by the intercession of the daughter of peace the sword was sheathed for a time, yet *the Lord God of recompences will surely requite.* Jer. li. 56. And that many of our legal self-righteous worldlings will find, one day or other, as Nabal and Israel of old did, when there will be no son or daughter of peace left to *stand in the gap.* Abigail's intercession prolonged Nabal's life but a few days; and Israel of old, at one time, found no intercessor, and consequently no respite. *And the Lord God of their fathers sent*

*to them by his messengers rising up betimes and sending, because he had compassion on his people and on his dwelling-place; but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 15, 16.* Even so the Saviour will one day punish the covetous worldlings as God punished Nabal. *I was an hungered and you gave me no meat; this was the crime of Nabal, who refused to relieve the Lord's anointed; and as David's wrath was kindled for the contempt of his message, and the indignity done to his servants, so will the Lord say, As ye did it not unto these my brethren ye did it not unto me; and these shall go away into everlasting punishment. Matt. xxv. 46.*

*Abimaaz.* I see that every part of God's word is pregnant with divine instruction, and affords the child of God sweet entertainment; but David's messengers met with better treatment when they went to espouse Abigail to David: she treated them with the greatest civility; they did not go home ashamed as before.

*Cushi.* And so will all the Lord's servants be treated by the elect, who, as Paul says, they are sent to espouse to the one husband, that they may present them as chaste virgins to Christ. 2 Cor. ii. 2.

Thus I have shewed thee, my brother, by what way I was led at first, namely, by observing the good hand of the Lord upon another, even David,

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as many others have done since. From these observations I was brought to an acquaintance with David, and to enjoy an union with him; and in time I became one of his messengers after he was established on the throne of Israel, and continued with him all the time that Absalom's conspiracy was carried on against him, and even to his death.

I was with the army of David when the rebels were defeated *in the wood of Ephraim*. 2 Sam. xviii. 6. And I was sent by Joab, the king's commander, to bear tidings to the citizens of Mahanaim of the *death of the conspirator*, and of the *defeat of the rebels*. 2 Sam. xviii. 21. But, alas! it happened to me, as it has done to many more; I began to be lifted up in my office; I thought it so great a thing to be a messenger of the Lord's anointed; and indeed so it was, for God evidently blessed and prospered every faithful friend that David had: but, to my shame, I forgot myself, and my bountiful Benefactor also, who had brought me not only to be a loyal subject of David, but a subject of a spiritual and an everlasting kingdom; nor did I daily acknowledge, as I ought to have done (and as I used to do), the good hand of God with me, which had fixed my station so nigh the king's person. My first backsliding step was ingratitude; and the next sin which always attends it is remissness in duty, and this leads to carnal security, and these procured my wretched fall, which soon followed;

for, as Solomon says, *a haughty spirit goes before a fall.*

*Abimaaz.* The dealings of God, both in providence and grace, have been wonderful with you indeed ; and one would think that a soul so deeply impressed with a sense of divine goodness, and daily compassed about with such visible displays of the tender care and rich mercy of God, could never become so insensible and ungrateful ; but, alas, I know by sad experience, *that the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it ?* Jer. xvii. 9.

But pray, what was your fall, my brother ? for I long to compare notes with you, for I have been down myself, as shall be related before we part, if God permit and you approve, for I am neither tired nor hungry, nor do I believe I shall if I sit here all the week.

*Cusbi.* Why, as I grew proud and self-sufficient, I grew independent of God, and neglected prayer ; this gradually brought deadness and barrenness on my soul, and consequently I became dry and unsavory in my conversation ; some of the king's devotional friends began to slight me on this account, and when I perceived this I began to shun the most spiritual part of the royal household, and to cleave to them who were but half-hearted to David ; and this led me to associate with some who secretly favoured the *house of Saul*. This alienation  
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of affection from David alienated my affections from David's God also ; the man that hates the saints of God in his heart can find no communion with God himself ; *he that hateth his brother abideth in darkness*, and if he does, he cannot find his way to God. From this time I felt an hatred rise in my heart against the Lord's anointed, and against his most loyal friends ; and when I have heard the king exult and triumph in the discriminating favour of God towards him, I was inwardly galled at it, and especially on recollecting that speech which he made to his wife Michal, *It was before the Lord, which chose me before thy father, and before all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the Lord, over Israel ; therefore I will play before the Lord.* 2 Sam. vi. 21. I shall not relate the wretched construction that my wicked mind put upon the words, but I found an enmity rise in my heart against him ; nor could I rejoice in his rapturous speeches, and heavenly acclamations, as I formerly had done. I found the words of pious Job to be true—*Envy slays the silly one.* Job v. 2. But the circumstance that wound my jealousy and envy up to the height was David's *giving up the five sons of Saul to the Gibeonites, to be hanged on the mountain of Gilboa.* 2 Sam. xxi.

Thus my love waxed cold to David, and I consequently lost my sweet fellowship with his God ; and all by a false spirit. I also justified in my heart the conduct of Rizpah, *the daughter of Ajah, when she took sackcloth and spread it for her upon*  
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*the rock from the beginning of harvest until water dropped upon them out of heaven, and suffered neither the birds of heaven to rest on their bodies by day, nor the beasts of the field by night. 2 Sam. xxi. 10. All my rebellion was levelled at God himself, who had left Saul, but swore to David that he would never leave him. Wo be to that man that knowingly espouses an interest that God has blasted; this was my sin, and I paid dear for it; I acted contrary to the visible testimony of God, which justified the king: For David's servants performed all that the king commanded, and the Lord was intreated for the land. 2 Sam. xxi. 14.*

Who could ever think that there could be such deception as this in a vessel of mercy? That an heart once in union with the saints, and enflamed with love to God, could ever be so damped in affection, both to God and his family, as to feel a sensible enmity against both, and be prejudiced in favour of apostates? But, as my royal master says, *What is man?*

*Abimaaz.* And pray how did the Lord deliver thee, my brother?

*Cushi.* The death of David shocked my very soul, and awfully alarmed my conscience; and the report of his last dying words, *Although my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure; for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5,* extorted Balaam's confession from my heart,



heart, *Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.* Num. xxiii. 10. I soon felt the loss of the sweet Psalmist of Israel; and found, by woful experience, what a dreadful thing it is to cherish enmity against a favourite of heaven whom God is determined to bless. But in reading my royal master's writings, which God was pleased to bless, I felt my soul revisited with the blessings of real repentance for my past folly, for which I must ever remain a debtor to the unchangeable love of God. I found my mind fit for nothing but silent solitude, and therefore I took David's book of Psalms in my hand, and determined to tread in all the footsteps (if possible) that he had gone; and when I came to any spot where he had been visited by the Lord, and delivered from any particular trouble, my soul felt such an unutterable love to him as cannot be expressed; indeed I never knew his worth till I felt my loss. And verily God made me feel all that I read of his writings, just as if it was all my own experience; *surely this is going forth by the footsteps of the flock.* Song i. 8.

I went and wept over his sepulchre by the hour, and felt an affection to his remains, as I believe the sleeping dust of Samuel and other holy prophets had often affected David himself—  
*He had took pleasure in the stones of Zion, and  
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*favoured the dust thereof.* Psalm cii. 14. From thence I came into the valley of Beca, and read what David said of that; and I am sure I enjoyed and felt every word of it, until I took his words as my own, and spoke to my long-suffering and propitious Redeemer in the language of his eminent type and faithful servant David; and, through the super-abounding and recovering grace of my covenant God, I am arrived at Hermon. Blessed be God, I have been now for some weeks under the sweet teaching of that divine instructor that taught me the path of life at first, and God grant that I never may fall, nor stray from him again, neither in heart nor in life.

*Abimaaz.* Wonderful are the works of God, and wonderful has his mercy been to thee, my brother; I think the union you have found with David's spirit in his writings, is what another means when he says, *We are come to mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the spirits of just men made perfect, &c.* Heb. xii. 22. The real believer, that has fellowship with the Father and the Son, by the Holy Ghost, is of one spirit with all the heavenly family; for we find a union of sentiment with them—we see as they saw,—and are in the same path of tribulation that they were in,—are under the influence of the same spirit,—and find a love  
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to them, a union with them, and a hope of joining them, and enjoying their company to all eternity.

*Cushi.* It certainly is the apostle's meaning; for we are united to the same head of influence that glorified souls enjoy above; there is but one blessed Spirit that unites the elect family both of heaven and earth to one head; only we *have but the first-fruits of the Spirit*, Rom. viii. 23, while they enjoy *the inheritance of the saints in light*, Acts xxvi. 18; for, as a good man says, Grace is glory begun below, and glory is grace in perfection. But let me hear a little of the dealings of God with thee, my brother.

*Abimaaz.* Pray do not you know me?

*Cushi.* No, not that I recollect.

*Abimaaz.* Do not you remember a person that pressed upon Joab to carry tidings after the death of Absalom, when the rebels were routed *in the woods of Ephraim*?

*Cushi.* Yes, I do, his name was Ahimaaz, a fresh-coloured young man. He was one that brought the wretched counsel of Ahithophel to David.

*Abimaaz.* You are right; and I am the man. *Hushai the Archite sent me with tidings to the king*, 2 Samuel xvii. 14, and I was obliged to stay by *Enrogal, the king's gardens, for fear of being taken by Absalom's spies; and at last I was hid in a well by a good woman who was a lover of David.* 2 Sam. xvii. 17, 18, 19.

*Cushi.*

*Cusbi.* Why you are much altered since that time.

*Abimaaz.* Yes; I have had a good deal to humble me since that, and blessed be God for it; for though I have been sorely afflicted, yet it has been for the good of my soul; for I find where there are no inward nor outward trials there is no growth in grace; but when once an heart has been thoroughly humbled, a little cross will bring it low.

*Cusbi.* I am glad at my heart to see thee, my brother; and especially to find thee a lover of the great and blessed Messiah.

*Abimaaz.* Not more glad than I am to see thee, and especially to find thee *a scribe so well instructed.*

*Cusbi.* But do tell me how thou camest acquainted with David at first, for I almost forget thee; for, to the best of my remembrance, thou didst not abide long in the king's service; nor do I remember the cause, nor the time of thy going out.

*Abimaaz.* My father's name was *Zadok, a priest and a Levite*, 2 Sam. xv. 24; and he received a charge from David *to carry the ark from following him back to the city*, ver. 25. My father being a priest, and a Levite, he was much in favour with the king; and indeed David sometimes stiled him a seer or prophet; and therefore, as David's confidant, he sent him back as a spy over the conspirators,

rators, and I went with him, as you read : *The king said also unto Zadok the priest, Art not thou a seer ? Return into the city in peace, and your two sons with you, Abimaaz thy son, and Jonatban the son of Abiathar.* 2 Sam. xv. 27.

My being the son of a pious priest, as well as a seer, I learnt to talk of religious matters fluently ; and being kept close to the worship of the Jews, as well as to family prayer, I was capable of speaking in prayer, and had an outside appearance of sanctity ; and indeed thought at times that I was a real saint and prophet of God, as well as my father : but, alas ! I have found since, that grace is not hereditary ; it is the gift of God, and from God we must receive it for ourselves, if ever we are saved.

*Cushi.* All the principles of religion that children learn by rote from their parents, be they ever so sound, they will give them all up when they are brought under deep convictions ; and be just as self-righteous and as self-willed as the most stubborn Pharisee in the world, until God brings them out of bondage, and then he will apply those wholesome truths to their heart, which before had only a lodging in their head.

*Abimaaz.* Indeed, my brother, that is a true assertion, I know it by experience ; whatever doctrines are instilled into people's heads by men, will easily be drove out by men, unless God apply them by the Holy Ghost.

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But, to proceed: I was sent by my father, in company with Jonathan, to carry tidings to David from Hushai; and when we had delivered our message to the king, I considered myself a man of consequence; first, as *the son of a seer*,—secondly, as a *messenger to the king*,—and, thirdly, as a *loyal subject* to David when so many rebelled against him. This was followed with the alarming tidings of *Ahithophel's having hanged himself*. I saw the Lord had answered David's prayer when he said, *O Lord, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness*; and was much surprised at the terrible judgments by which God had answered it. I secretly thanked God in my heart that I was not like Ahithophel, and was not a little pleased with my loyalty; and truly I thought myself on the Lord's side, because I was with the Lord's anointed. And indeed this awful judgment falling on so great a man, in answer to David's simple prayer, so fired my zeal, that I followed the king to Mahanaim, and went with the king's forces against the rebels; and was with Joab when Absalom was slain, and thought myself a man as sufficient to bear tidings as any in Palestine. I earnestly pressed upon Joab to let me go, but Joab would not send the tidings by me, though I used much importunity.

*Cushi.* You are not the first man, my brother, that has been forward at this work, nor will you be the last; those that have the fewest tidings to bear

bear are the most forward to run,—and they that have nothing to say are sure to outrun them that have ; but if ever God sends them with tidings, they will have all their ground to run over again ; for if they are true messengers, they must go all the way in regeneration which they went before in external profession.

*Abimaaz.* True, my brother ; and so I have found it ; for after Joab had called and sent you with the tidings, I was grieved at it, though he told me that *I should bear tidings another day, but then I had no tidings ready* ; however, I importuned him again *to let me run after you*, but he refused ; but I wearied him with my importunity *until he said, Run* ; so I set off *by the way of the plain, and so outrun you.* 2 Sam. xviii. 18 to 23.

*Cushi.* Ah, that is often the case now-a-days ; there are many that run before they are sent ; and if *one takes the path of tribulation, and the other the way of the plain*, no wonder if the latter, in the judgment of men, outruns the former. But in the eyes of the Lord it is not so,—*there are last that shall be first, and first last* ; so many are called by the gospel, *but few chosen of God*, and fewer still to bear tidings. Matt. xx. 16. *The race, says the wise man, is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong.* Eccl. ix. 11. Many a wise man has mistook the road, and missed the mark, while *the fool has not erred in the path*, Isa. xxxv. 8 ; and when the great spoil was divided, *the lame have took the prey.* Isa. xxxiii. 23.

But pray what were the chief motives that so strongly induced you to bear tidings? for the man who waits for tidings in the field of battle is in imminent danger, nor is he in less danger when he runs with tidings, for he is exposed to the arrows of every scouting party.

*Abimaaz.* I have often observed that when the citizens of Zion have set a watchman upon their walls, to observe the approach of an enemy to their liberties, or an ambassador of peace; if the latter has appeared, as soon as the *watchman lifted up his voice, and gave the watch-word*, Isa. lii. 8, the citizens would immediately climb upon the walls, and when they saw the messenger gain the summit of an hill, they would cry out, *How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth*, Isa. lii. 7; and as soon as he drew nigh the walls, the porter would open the door with such joy to see him, and cry out, *Come in, thou blessed of the Lord, why standest thou without?* Gen. xxiv. 31. And as soon as he came in, all the inhabitants of the city would flock round him from every quarter, to hear what the tidings were; and while he has stood publishing them, some would smile, others weep, some triumph, and some could hardly keep audience for joy; and when he has ended his oration, some have wept over him, others thanked God for sending him, others wishing to hear the same tidings over again; and, to be short, all those



those that prized their liberties have showered the blessings of heaven upon his head. Indeed some few, that knew not what a citizen's liberties were worth, have gone away railing at the messenger and his message both; but the citizens who were *free men* have followed them up with such sharp rebukes, and have so justified *wisdom's messenger and message*, that they have skulked away *with a fallen countenance*, like those who once *accused the adulterous woman before the Great Messiah*.

By these observations I clearly saw that there was a double honour belonging to the office; and I have secretly envied the messenger, and coveted the honour of his holy calling. These were my motives; and I thought with myself thus:—My father is a priest,—I have good learning, and can speak with a more audible voice than he, and have sublime expressions at command to convey tidings,—and who more fit than I?

*Cushi.* Ah, my brother, but there is a power that attends a real tidings-bearer which no audible voice can command; the power is of the Messiah, and not of us; and *those that honour him he will honour*. 1 Sam. ii. 30.

*Abimaaz.* Blessed be God I know that now; but, as I before observed, these were my motives; and as I knew the citizens of Mahanaim would all be longing for tidings, I was determined to get their praise; therefore I strove to outrun you, though I sweat for it.

*Cushi.* And when you came to the city, pray what did you say ?

*Abimaaz.* Oh, I made a poor tale of it; *The king said, Is the young man Absalom safe? and I answered, When Joab sent the king's servant, and me thy servant, I saw a great tumult, but I knew not what it was.* 2 Sam. xviii. 29.

*Cushi.* And pray how did the citizens receive you, my friend; did they exult and triumph, and bless your feet for bringing good tidings ?

*Abimaaz.* No, far from it; their seeing me run so fast raised their expectation very high; and the watchman crying out, *The running of the foremost is like the running of Abimaaz, the son of Zadok,* 2 Sam. xviii. 27, raised it still higher, so that they expected good tidings, and an eloquent oration from the son of the seer. But, alas, all their expectations were cut off, and their very countenances were expressive of the effects of their starving disappointment; my *false gift, of which I had boasted, was* (as wisdom says) *a cloud and wind without rain,* Prov. xxv. 14; and so the citizens found it, for they got neither refreshment nor hope from my tidings.

*Cushi.* But I suppose you thought that you should cut a figure among them when you set off, did you not ?

*Abimaaz.* O yes, that I did; for I thought the very word tidings, and a few encomiums put upon the king, would be enough to set all the citizens  
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in an ecstasy; for I had observed in the tidings of others, that many praises on the king were introduced, therefore I was determined not to leave these out.

*Cushi.* And did you cry out tidings, and praise the king?

*Abimaaz.* You may be sure that I tried to mimic others as well as I could; I made a great outcry, I bowed my knees, and I praised the king: *I called out and said to the king, All is well; and I fell down to the earth on my face before the king, and said, Blessed be the Lord thy God, which hath delivered up the men that lifted up their hand against my lord the king.* 2 Sam. xviii. 28; but when they began to enquire into particulars, I was obliged to tell them that *I saw a great tumult, but I knew not what it was.* 2 Sam. xviii. 29.

*Cushi.* And suppose any of the citizens had asked you who sent you, what should you have said to them?

*Abimaaz.* Had that been the case, I could not have answered them at all, for indeed I was not sent; I only got leave of Joab to run after you, when indeed my intent was to run before you, and that only for the sake of applause.

*Cushi.* The man that bears tidings, ought to shew both *his mission and commission*; and if the citizens are satisfied with these, they will shew him respect, and give him audience too, whether his

tidings be disagreeable or pleasing. How wouldest thou have acted if they had scrutinized thy knowledge of heraldry and war, by asking thee what *banners were displayed?* Isa. xiii. and what *standards were set up?* Isa. xlix. 22; who *discovered their valour?* 2 Tim iv. 7; and who their *cowardice?* Psal. lxxviii. 9; what persons deserted, and who came over to the *king's standard?* Isa lxii. 10; what *standard-bearer fainted?* Isa. x. 18; who stood it out? 1 Cor. xvi. 13; and who first *broke their ranks?* Joel ii. 7; who were taken prisoners, how many wounded, Acts ii. 37, and how many slain?

*Abimaaz.* All this I thought nothing about; I cried out, *All is well*, dropped upon my knees, and praised the king in God's name; and I thought that would do.

But I was much abashed to see how the citizens looked at me; I appeared as a mere impostor confounded before them, and some of them whispered together, saying, What could tempt him to run, sweating at that rate, with the empty sound of *All is well* in his mouth, when he knows nothing of the matter?

*Cushi.* And pray what said the king to thee?

*Abimaaz.* He frowned upon me, and put me to the blush before the loyalists, by telling me *to give this man place* (namely you). He sternly said unto me, *Turn aside, and stand here; and I turned aside, and stood still.* 2 Sam. xviii. 30.

*Cushi,*

*Cushi.* Thou art not the first aspiring character that has *been put lower in the presence of the prince, whom thine eyes have seen.* Prov. xxv. 7.

*Abimaaz.* I assure you, my brother, that my pride was much hurt at it, my consequence much demolished, and I have been fully convinced since, that more than an audible voice is wanted in those that bear tidings. And, indeed, from that time I found my false zeal abate, and my love to the king wax cold; and no wonder, when I only followed him to gain a name, and get applause; and expected him to encourage me in my pride.

*Cushi.* And did this affair put a final stop to your desire of appearing in that character?

*Abimaaz.* No; I ran with the words, *All is well,* in my mouth after that.

But that which put a final stop to my running was, I had a fall upon a certain mountain, as you had on Mount Gilboa. Your barren soul lay there many days (you say), without either *dew or rain*; but mine had never felt either.

*Cushi.* Pray where was you running, and what was the name of the mountain on which you fell? Did you *stumble upon one of the dark mountains?* Jer. xiii. 16.

*Abimaaz.* If I had, I should not have known it, because I had never been in *the light*. No; I was running from Mahanaim to Jerusalem, to carry the tidings of *Abjalom's death, and the defeat of the rebels.* The king did not send me, nor was I sent

by any body else, but I stole away ; for as I had met with a wretched disappointment before at Mahanaim, I was determined to try my luck again at Jerufalem ; but juft as I came *to the village called Bethphage, at the mount of Olives*, Mark xi. 1, and was afcending the next hill, down I came neck and heels.

*Cufhi.* What, did you fall on the mount of Olives ?

*Abimaaz.* If I had, I fhould have been able to have got up again. No ; it was the next mount to that, called the *Mount of Corruption* : and rightly named it is ; for there Solomon fell, and clofe to it he raifed up all his abominable temples for idolatry, as you read, *And the high places that were before Jerufalem, which were on the right hand of the Mount of Corruption, which Solomon (the king of Ifrael) had builded for Afhtoreth the abomination of the Zidonians, and for Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites, and for Milcom the abomination of the children of Ammon, did [Jofiah] defile.* 2 Kings xxiii. 13.

*Cufhi.* There never was above one man yet that found a way to Jerufalem, fo as entirely to efcape that mountain, for it ftands right before the city : and it is upon that mount that all the abominable Babels, vain towers, bafelefs caftles, and imaginary ftructures in the world have been reared. I believe that is the mount that bears up the whole fabric of iniquity ; it is a fpot that is barren of all good ;

no good fruit ever grows there. This the great Messiah shewed to his followers, when he *curst the fruitless fig-tree*; that tree was barren, and yet it grew almost a quarter of a mile from that mount.

*Abimaaz.* They never could get the Messiah to put his foot on that mount; he kept close to the Mount of Olives, until he came to the foot of the Mount of Corruption; and then he sent his servants to fetch the as; and he rode all the rest of the way upon the garments of his followers; as it is written, *And they brought the colt to Jesus, and cast their garments on him; and he sat upon him; and many spread their garments in the way.* Mark xi. 7, 8. Perhaps this was done to show them, *that their filthy rags of self-righteousness*, Isa. xlv. 6, or *their filthy garments*, Zech. iii. 3, ought to be left at the foot of that mount, as more fit for the foot of an as, than the ornament of a Christian.

*Cushi.* That is right, and you have hit the mark; the Saviour did nothing in vain. It was not without a cause that he stopped at that mount, nor did he curse the fruitless fig-tree, mount the as, or ride on the clothes of his followers, for nothing. But I suppose you learnt something by your fall; that is, you had some strange sensations, and found yourself too much disabled to run with tidings, did you not?

*Abimaaz.* Indeed I did; for I never knew what the fall of Adam meant, till I fell on that mount;  
nor

nor did I form any true idea of corruption till I stumbled on that mount myself; for I thought I fell from all hope of mercy; I felt myself the basest mortal in all the world; my beauty and self-sufficiency all vanished, and I thought the mount and myself were both of a piece, for *all my comeliness was turned into corruption, and I retained no strength* [for bearing tidings]. Dan. x. 8.

*Cusbi.* Then I suppose you could hardly credit your own tidings, I mean, *that all was well*, “nor yet praise the king, as usual?”

*Abimaaz.* Indeed I found neither love to the king nor to the loyalists; I was all enmity as well as corruption.

*Cusbi.* You was more fit to carry tidings then, than ever you had been before: I suppose you found yourself in a fine pickle; pray who helped you up?

*Abimaaz.* Indeed, if I had been sent with tidings then, they would have been heavy tidings, and consequently I should not have run so fast.

There appeared to me a man with a shining countenance, and asked me what country I was of? I told him I was not a countryman, but a citizen of Jerusalem, and the son of a certain priest. He replied, I did not ask after your descent, but your residence; if you are a citizen of Jerusalem, *there is a fountain opened for the inhabitants of that city for sin and for uncleanness.* Zech. xiii. 1. I told him that I could not stand. He answered, *Let the weak*



*weak say, I am strong.* Joel iii. 10. But I replied, *I cannot see.* He answered, *I bring the blind by a way that they know not.* Isa. xlii. 16. I fell into a kind of a gloomy trance, and was insensibly conveyed to a fountain which my mind had some glimmering views of : and I found myself, in three days after, before Mount Calvary, clothed, becalmed, cleansed, in perfect peace, and in my right mind : but what I saw there, and what I felt, I shall never be able to describe ; nor how this amazing change was wrought, shall I ever be able rightly to relate ; for I soon found that all my eloquence, and sublime style, were entirely insufficient to relate or represent so divine an operation, and so glorious a change.

*Cushi.* But did you not run to some of the king's messengers, and tell them the vision ?

*Abimaaz.* Yes ; and in this I acted like Daniel, *I was astonished at the vision, but none understood it.* Dan. viii. 27.

*Cushi.* But did none laugh at it, nor rail against it ?

*Abimaaz.* Yes ; some called me a mystic, some a Sadducee, some an enthusiast, some a fanatic, some a Pythagorean, and others an Antinomian ; but I knew no more what they meant by these names, than they did of my vision.

*Cushi.* It is very well you did not ; for they only called you by these names, being provoked to jealousy by your happiness : they will take care not to explain

explain the meaning of these reproachful names, lest they should appear applicable to themselves.

*Abimaaz.* They seemed to me to be quite strangers to the mount on which I fell, and indeed so was I, till I tumbled upon it ; for I have often gone over it without feeling its dreadful effects.

*Cushi.* 'Yes ; and so have many more ; but the great Messiah, when he stood at the foot of the Mount of Olives, took particular notice of the Mount of Corruption. *For, in the morning as they passed by, they saw the fig-tree dried up by the roots. And Peter calling to remembrance, saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig-tree which thou cursedst is withered away. And Jesus answering, saith unto them, Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, that whosoever shall say unto this mountain [pointing to the Mount of Corruption, which was parted from the Mount of Olives by only a valley], Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea ; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass ; he shall have whatsoever he saith.* Mark xi. 21, 22, 23.

*Abimaaz.* If you see any thing in the Messiah's words, my brother, I wish you would explain them to me, as I am concerned in their meaning, and have not the least desire of satisfying a vain curiosity.

*Cushi.* Depend upon it, my brother, that the Messiah never spake or did any thing in vain. You say you know what the Mount of Corruption means,  
by

by woful experience; if so, when the Saviour pointed to that mount in the singular number, doubtless he meant the sins of men, and the guilt which they have contracted, both which go by the name of corruption; and when he says, *faith shall remove it into the sea*, he means, that those who really believe in a reconciled God, through himself, shall find the guilt, and destroying power of their sins, and at last the whole body of corruption removed for ever; agreeable to this text, *he will turn again, he will have compassion upon us, he will subdue our iniquities, and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.* Micah vii. 19.

If we had faith enough to remove the Mount of Corruption, no mountain of difficulties would discourage us, nor would mount Sinai itself terrify us.

*Abimaaz.* I believe you, my brother; for a man's worst enemies are the corruptions of his own heart; and I believe the main root of all is unbelief. If I had faith enough to pluck up unbelief, I could say to the *sycamine-tree* (mentioned by the Messiah), *Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey me.* Luke xvii. 6.

*Cushi.* It was that kind of tree that *Zaccheus* climbed up into, in order to see the Saviour. Luke xix. 4. If he had climbed up into *Ezekiel's cedar*, I believe the Messiah would never have called him down, for that is to be a refuge for all fowls of every

*every wing.* Ezek. xvii. 22, 23. But pray how did you fare among the messengers of the king, after they had heard your vision.

*Abimaaz.* Why, after all of them had treated me and my vision with contempt, I began to think lightly of it myself, and so gradually lost all the comfort of it. That which gave the greatest disgust to them was, my saying it was "a sovereign and discriminating act of God to bring me that way:" and such an act it was to a demonstration, because I could find none that understood it; but, blessed be God, I felt the comforts of it, nor do I believe the remembrance of it, nor the effects of it, will ever be lost; but the word sovereign seemed to give great offence among them, as if I would feign myself to be a singular man; when I only told them the dealings of God with myself, that they might pass their judgment on it, not doubting but they all had experienced the same; but as none of them had experienced the like, nor understood the vision, I took it for granted that there was something singular in it.

*Cushi.* Every man must stand by his own testimony, that is yours, and you must abide by it: he that would deprive you of it, without convincing you that you are wrong, is both a thief and a robber, and you are no better than Esau if you give it up. *Hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.* Rev. iii. 11.

*Abimaaz.* I bless God, the impression and the witness

witness is still left, though the joys of it are much abated, and the light of it much obscured.

For you must know that I dropped into the old way of Jewish worship again; and as I could find no man that understood the vision, but that all condemned it, I soon got cold, until a late fit of sickness fell to my lot, to which I reluctantly submitted: but before I recovered, I found something of that sacred and delightful fire (which is so despised) glow again in my heart; and since I have been able to go abroad, I have spent the chief of my time in private, and enjoyed my comforts alone; and this is the farthest journey that I have taken since my recovery. This is the reason that you see me look so poorly; and I think that God sent you to me to cast a fresh light on this good work upon my soul, and I hope I shall ever bless God for thee, and for this happy season with thee.

*Cushi.* Indeed, my brother, it is my delightful element, to be of use to the souls of my poor fellow-sinners; and I do believe that God has suffered me to meet with hard treatment, both from the world and from his own people also, that I might, as an instrument in his hand, drop a word in season to others who may meet with the same. And I would advise thee to aim chiefly at a private communion with the great Messiah; there is no fellowship (but with him) that will enable thee to die happy; and I hope thou wilt never find happiness short of that, whilst thou livest.

*Abimaaz.*

*Abimaaz.* Indeed, if a Christian has no access to his God, let him cut what figure he may in the world, his own soul is barren, nor does joy and peace in believing operate upon him. Those that called me a Pythagorean, because I talked of a change wrought on my soul, seemed to be as far from enjoying God's presence as those who made no profession at all.

*Cushi.* Let men make what stir they may about religion, if they have not the love of God in their hearts, they are dead. The Spirit says, *If a man hath all knowledge, and understand all mysteries, and speak with the tongue of men and of angels, and hath not charity, it profiteth him nothing.* 1 Cor. xiii. 2, 3.

And if ever a man be brought to love God, it will be because God hath pardoned his sin: *This woman's sins were many, and they are forgiven her, and she loveth much; but where little is forgiven the same loveth little.* Luke vii. 47. Love is therefore the blessed effect of pardon, or the consequence of it.

*Abimaaz.* O how wonderful is the enlarging, enflaming, and attracting power of divine love on the soul! it swallows up all, and God is *all in all* to such an happy soul. But, alas, this love is little insisted on in our days; indeed it is rather opposed.

*Cushi.* He that labours only at the letter, is not a minister of the Spirit, 2 Cor. iii. 6; nor does he exalt the kingdom of God, for *that stands not in word; but in power.* 1 Cor. iv. 20.

*Abimaaz.*

*Abimaaz.* Pray what do you think of David's strong affection for Absalom? David knew that he was not a good man; nay, he was a rebel against his father, and against God, who anointed him; and he that opposed David's kingdom, opposed the kingdom of the Messiah, for that was included in it, and prefigured by it. Absalom could be no type of the Messiah, who is called *the fruit of David's body*.

*Cushi.* The great Messiah is the father of all flesh by creation, as David was of his own family, which consisted of bad and good. *Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us?* Mal. ii. 10. But in an especial manner he is the everlasting father of all his spiritual children. Isa. ix. 6. Absalom was David's son after the flesh, though not a partaker of his father's grace; but Solomon, *the beloved of the Lord*, 2 Sam. xii. 24, was a partaker of his father's grace, as well as a partaker of his nature. And David's weeping over Absalom, and crying out, *O my son Absalom, my son, my son*, 2 Sam. xviii. 33, may prefigure the sympathetic feelings of the Messiah's humanity for Israel after the flesh, when he wept over Jerusalem, and said, *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem*. Matt. xxiii. 37.—Luke xix. 41.

*Abimaaz.* Poor David was much perplexed with hypocritical professors in his days; Joab was a bitter plague to him through all his reign, as well as Ahithophel.

*Cushi.* I believe Joab prefigured every false leader  
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of the Lord's saints; and Ahithophel represented Judas; one you know hung himself as Judas did, and the other was killed at the foot of the altar, as many are, by the sword of justice in a false profession.

*Abimaaz.* I have often wondered that Joab should fly for refuge to the horns of the altar.

*Cusbi.* The altar typified the Saviour, who is a refuge for the distressed; and Joab might falsely construe the privileges that God granted to the manslayer; but Joab's crime was not manslaughter, for he *killed Amasa with his sword while he was kissing of him*, 2 Sam. xx. 9, 10; and *so shed the blood of war in peace*. 1 Kings ii. 5. A wilful murderer has no benefit from the laws granted to the manslayer. God says of such, *Thou shalt take him from my altar*. Exod. xxi. 14. Pray, my brother, have you ever heard of a man that goes by the name of Prodigality?

*Abimaaz.* Yes, I think I have; he is one of a singular character, if he be the person that I mean.

*Cusbi.* Yes, he is; and it is a name that he has assumed, because its wretched signification is so applicable to himself; for, as he says, he has been a prodigal from his childhood, and a desperate rebel against Christ under it.

*Abimaaz.* Why he has acted as Naomi did, who in a fit of unbelief fled from Bethlehem to Moab, in order to secure her property, a famine then reigning in Israel; but, instead of saving all, she  
lost



lost all ; for she came home childless, in widowhood and beggary ; she had lost both her sons, her husband, and her property ; and then she calls herself Mara, and desires them to call her Naomi no more ; hinting thereby, that what she had took pleasure in was gone, and bitterness had succeeded : *For the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty ; why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the Lord hath testified against me ?* Ruth i. 20, 21.

*Cushi.* She could see that the hand of the Lord was gone out against her, but she could not see that her feet went out against him. If there were no protection for her in Israel, she could not expect it in Moab. Thus the *foolishness of man perverteth his way, and his heart fretteth against the Lord.* Prov. xix. 3.

*Abimaaz.* Pray what countryman is this Prodigalis ? I think I have heard that the Lord has called him by grace, if he be the man that I have heard of.

*Cushi.* I believe he was born within the walls of salvation, and is, as you have heard, called to the knowledge of the truth ; he came of religious parents, but he was a most wretched despiser of religion ; indeed, he is a singular monument of mercy ; he had a strong memory to contain what he heard, was a man of good understanding in the Scriptures, and he had pious parents to copy after. But all these will not produce grace. Repentance unto

life is the gift of God ; it is in no man's power to repent of himself, nor can a true penitent infuse repentance into another. Notwithstanding his hating of religion, he had many severe checks of conscience at times, which he could not hide even from his parents ; they kept a strict hand over him in a religious way, and made him attend them at public ordinances, though full sore against his will.

He was their only child, and I believe a child of many prayers and tears ; for the state of his soul lay with a perpetual weight on his parents, and I believe they travailed hard to see Christ formed within him.

*Abimaaz.* If he was so wickedly bent in heart, the more he knew of religion the greater was his sin ; men in a state of rebellion, with their heads fraught with religious knowledge, are like the renowned ones in the antediluvian world ; or like the Pharisees, who drew near to God with their lips, and honoured him with their tongues, while their hearts were far from him.

His poor parents must have grief enough to see an only child such an enemy to God. Pray, did his parents live to see their prayers answered in his conversion ? I have no doubt but they were answered *in their own bosom.*

*Cushi.* Their prayers were wonderfully answered in their son's conversion, but they did not live to see the pleasing sight.

*Abimaaz.* But is it not astonishing that a child should

should display such a wretched bent to wickedness, in the face of so much piety, and practise it under the severe lashes of a guilty conscience? It is as if he was given up entirely to the devil, to sin in the open face of gospel light.

*Cushi.* It is the eye of justice darting his rays on the guilty conscience that alarms it, and keeps it awake: the devil finding this, he cannot get such a soul into a state of carnal security, *the strong man cannot keep possession of such a palace in peace*; therefore, he stirs up the enmity of the mind to oppose and resist the light; he blows up heat and passion, and when he can get such an one to sin, it is in a desperate way, that he may sink the poor soul in despair, and so overwhelm him with guilt and horror. The eye of justice is as terrible to Satan, and his dark kingdom, as it was to Pharaoh and his host at the Red Sea. The devil hates the light of truth; hence it is that he so often stirs up the carnal mind of sinners to hate those that long for their salvation; the light of truth discovers the sinner's state, and Satan's works, which he cannot endure. When our Lord sent his disciples out to spread the true light, Satan, with all his counterfeited lustre, sunk down and skulked into his own infernal shade: *I saw Satan as lightning fall from heaven.* Luke x. 18. This being the case, the devil is obliged to act with awakened conscience as the highwayman does with the fearful traveller, do his business in haste, and be desperate in it.

*Abimaaz.* I almost wonder that our benign Benefactor did not indulge the pious parents of this poor sinner with the pleasing sight of his conversion before their decease, as you know it must have greatly excited their gratitude to God; and the Lord says, *He that offereth me praise glorifieth me.*

*Cushi.* The Lord is a sovereign, and doth as he pleases; yet several reasons may be assigned why the Lord did not thus indulge them: First, As he was their only child, I think he engrossed too much of their affections: Secondly, They gave him too much indulgence in his childhood, which his rebellion requited them for: Thirdly, Their travailing hard in prayer for him, brought many blessings on their own souls, and served as a spur to their devotions, under which they ripened for glory: and, lastly, His cruel requital to his parents helped forward his convictions, when God brought in his bill and laid him under a divine arrest.

*Abimaaz.* The conversion of this man affords a deal of encouragement to praying parents; and I believe it is right for believers to persevere in prayer for their children, notwithstanding the discouragements that they often meet with; and, indeed, the Messiah spoke a whole parable to this end, *that men ought always to pray, and not to faint.*

*Cushi.* We ought to pray for them, and must leave the event to God; *they that sow in tears shall reap in joy.* Many prayers and tears have been scattered about a throne of grace, that have been  
answered

answered afterwards *in a shower of blessings*. Ezek. xxxiv. 26. And much seed hath been sown in sinners hearts, that for a while may seem to lie dormant, but afterwards it sheweth itself. *And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground, and should sleep, and rise, night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up; he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself, first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.* Mark iv. 26, 27, 28.

*Abimaaz.* Pray how old was the youth when his parents died? Were they people of property? Did they leave him any thing?

*Cushi.* I believe he was about fifteen years of age at the death of his father, who left him an apprentice to an attorney at law, and left him with a very considerable property; but he soon spent it, when he got it into his own hands, which I do not wonder at, for as the old people were dotingly fond of him, they were perpetually endeavouring to save what they could, in order to leave him in great possessions; and, if I am rightly informed, their anxiety in this matter was their sin; and for my part, I do believe that whatsoever people get for their children, with an unwarrantable anxiety, so as to close the bowels of liberality to all but their own offspring, do greatly dishonour God by a visible distrust of his providence; and in reality they entail a curse upon all that they leave; and perhaps this was the reason why they had such

*Strong bands in their death.* God will purge the soul that he saves from sin, if it be by fire.

*Abimaaz.* Their putting their son out apprentice to an attorney (a business in which it is impossible for a man to live, and keep a good conscience towards God), and their carefulness after this world's goods, gives me room to suspect that divinity never made a very deep impression upon their souls; for he that drinketh of the living water that the Saviour gives shall never thirst [after the riches of this life]. *But the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.* John iv. 13, 14. Pray did you know them, or do you go by report?

*Cushi.* I have seen them, but had no acquaintance with them; though they are reported to be singularly pious, yet I know it is not all gold that shines, nor are they all maids that pass for such, and wear white aprons. I know the best of saints are burdened with the remains of corrupt nature, which, at times, has broke out and left its spots in the brightest characters, as incest in Lot, excess in Noah, adultery in David, and blasphemy in Peter; yet there are some sins that they stand clear of, I mean such as are real partakers of the Holy Ghost.

*Abimaaz.* Pray, my brother, what are those sins that you suppose every inspired soul to stand free from? For my part I would wish to stand for ever free from all; for it is the death of all real  
comfort,

comfort, as well as a great dishonour to God, and a sweet morsel to them that eat up the sin of God's people.

*Cushi.* I think there are two sins which are not found in the dark catalogue of any gracious character in the Bible. One sin is what the law calls *presumption*, Num. xv. 30; which David calls *the great transgression*, Psalm xix. 13; which John calls *the sin unto death*, 1 John v. 16; but Christ calls it *the unpardonable sin*. Matt. xii. 31.

The other sin is covetousness; for this sin God was wroth with Israel and smote him, and of this he promises *to heal him*. Isaiah lvii. 17, 18. Paul calls it *the root of all evil*, 1 Tim. vi. 10, and *idolatry*, Col. iii. 5, which the Saviour calls *the service of mammon*, Matt. vi. 24, and pronounces *a wo* on all such servants. Luke vi. 24, 25. To the best of my knowledge, I do not remember that ever *daring presumption*, and the *love of money*, are once filed among any of the bills that God hath brought in against a real citizen of Zion; his character excludes both these, Psalm xv. These are the two sins against which David levels the force of his prayers, *Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins*. Psalm xix. 13. *Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness*. Psalm cxix. 36. Both these are the devil's own marks, and I defy the world to prove them to be marks of a saint; wherever we find any thus marked, we may say, *They have corrupted themselves; their spot is not*  
*the*

*the spot of the children [of God]; they are a perverse and crooked generation.* Deut. xxxii. 5.

*Abimaaz.* I have often wondered why Paul calls *the love of money the root of all evil.* The apostle seems to intimate, that one single root is sufficient to produce the whole crop of wickedness: I wonder what he makes the root of all godliness to be?

*Cushi.* The root of all vital godliness is the love of God, operating on the affections of a regenerate soul; and this love is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us: this is Paul's root, *Be ye rooted and grounded in love.* Eph. iii. 17. Job tells you, this root of the matter was found in him, as was before hinted; and false professors not having *this root in them, is the cause of their withering away.* Matt. xiii. 6.

These two roots are clearly seen in the ten commandments; for that which is therein required is, love to God and thy neighbour; and he that loveth God and his neighbour hath fulfilled the law. *Love worketh no ill to his neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.* Rom. xiii. 10. As love includes all obedience to the law; so covetousness includes all disobedience. *Thou shalt not covet.* Exod. xx. 17. *I had not known sin but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.* Rom. vii. 7.

*Abimaaz.* By the apostle's calling the love of money a root, it must take a deep hold in man; and



and if so, nothing but the grace of God can root it up.

*Cushi.* Salvation, applied to the sinner's conscience by the Spirit of grace, will do it, and nothing else. *There was a man named Zaccheus, who was chief among the publicans, and he was rich. And he sought to see Jesus who he was. And he ran before, and climbed upon into a sycamore-tree. But Jesus said unto him, Zaccheus, make haste, and come down, for to-day I must abide at thy house. And when they [the Lord's followers] saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest to a man that is a sinner. And Zaccheus stood, and said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him four-fold. And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham.* Luke xix. 2—9. Thus the presence of the Lord, and his salvation, applied by the spirit of grace, opens the contracted bowels of a worldling, and makes him disgorge half his property at once. This shews the purging quality of grace: *Every branch in me that beareth fruit my Father purgeth it.* John xv. 2. If a chosen vessel hath swallowed down riches [when grace is revealed] it makes him vomit them up again: *God shall cast them out of his belly.* Job xx. 15.

*Abimaaz.* Excuse my breaking in upon your discourse, which I should not have done, but I think

think you are wrong in excluding covetousness from the sins of bible saints. You know we are all fallible creatures, and liable to err; I think the church of the Laodiceans is charged with covetousness, and that in express terms, *Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing.* Rev. iii. 17.

*Cushi.* I do not pretend to infallibility; that belongs to God: nor do I deny what you say of the Laodicean church; I take it for granted that there were some real saints in that church; but those whom the Saviour's charge concerned, are said to be altogether ignorant of their state. [Thou] *knowest not, that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.* Rev. iii. 17. If these covetous professors were ignorant, wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked, they were as destitute of grace as ever Judas was; and if they were not graceless, they would not stand in need of being counselled to *buy of the Saviour gold tried in the fire that they might be rich: and white raiment that they might be clothed, and that the shame of their nakedness might not appear; and to anoint their eyes with eye-salve, that they might see.* Rev. iii. 18.

The love of money, the root of all evil, can never be rooted in a soil where the love of God keeps a proper hold; it is a sin that hell itself will never purge a soul from, any more than the sight of a gallows will destroy the love of evil in a felon who

who is going reluctantly to receive, at the hand of justice, the dreadful *wages of unrighteousness*. Rom. vi. 23.

*Mammon*, that fallen angel, has been in the horrors of hell nigh six thousand years, yet, to this day, he tempts thousands to covetousness, and thousands are influenced with his disposition; yea, they serve him with delight, and are in friendship with him, though Christ declares, that when they fall of heaven, they shall spend an eternity with him in hell. *And I say unto you, make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.* Luke xvi. 10. Be not offended at my asserting that hell itself will not purge a soul from sin; hell is not intended to be a place of purgation, as some affirm, but a place of punishment. 2 Thess. i. 9.

*Abimaaz*. Well, I cannot contradict thee, my brother; but do let me hear a little of the conversion of Prodigalis; for I can take comfort in the repentance of a sinner, but to hear of their wickedness is rather a terror to me.

*Cusbi*. So can I; and am determined, through grace, to labour hard as long as I live to be instrumental, if God please, in bringing sinners to repentance. After Mr. Prodigalis had wasted all his substance with riotous living, he became melancholy, his past conduct began to recoil on his mind with the sensible impressions of guilt; this quenched

quenched his popular spirit, and reduced his vigorous faculties to the gloomy recesses of silent solitude. Retirement best suited the melancholy frame of his mind; he abandoned all company, and chose to wander in the most dreary paths, as judging himself unfit for society. In one of his solitary walks he was insensibly brought into a gloomy vale, where he was led in a vision to see the true state of his soul in the sight of God. This valley can only be seen in a vision:—*The band of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the Spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of dry bones, and caused me to pass by them round about; and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry. And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live?* Ezek. xxxvii. 1, 2, 3. In this valley he saw his awful state; it was impressed upon his mind that the valley represented the fall of man, or *the sinner's low estate*. Psalm cxxxvi. 23. The bones represented death, the trophies of sin and Satan, Rom. v. 12; and their being *very dry*, exhibited the barren and fruitless state of a soul in the sight of God, which is compared here to *dry bones*, and by the prophet Isaiah to *dry ground*, Isa. xlv. 3, which represents the soul to be dead, without any affection to God, and without any motion toward him.

*Abimaaz.* Indeed that is the true state of a sinner before he be quickened by the Holy Ghost; he  
is

is under the sentence of the law, and under the sentence of his own conscience; as John declares, *He that believes not is condemned already.* John iii. 18. *He is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.* Tit. iii. 11. And with respect to life or motion toward God, he hath none; as the Apostle witnesseth, *You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins,* Eph. ii. 1; and I believe the Saviour meant this when he said to one of his disciples, *Let the dead bury their dead,* but go thou and preach the kingdom of God; certainly he meant, let those that are dead in trespasses and sins bury those that departed this life in their sins, or in an unpardoned state.

*Cushi.* What you have said is true; man, fallen man, is dead in law, and under the sentence of it, and spiritually dead to God, destitute of all good, either feeling, affection, or motion; and as he daily heaps up sin upon sin, so treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath. The scriptures represent him as buried in his own transgressions. *Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel; behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts. Therefore prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your*  
graves,

*graves, and shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land; then shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, saith the Lord. Ezek. xxxvii. 11—14.*

Thus, my dear brother, you see the *low estate of man*, represented by this *valley*; his spiritual death by the *bones*; his *spiritual death*, I say, for these men were not literally dead; the barrenness of his soul, while in an hopeless state, is represented by the *dryness* of the *bones*; and the transgressions that his soul is involved in, by the *graves*; and his spiritual resurrection is by the power of God—*I will bring you up out of your graves*; and the quickening of his dead soul is done by the Spirit—*I shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live.*

*Abimaaz.* I bless God that ever I met with thee. The Lord has given thee a blessed talent for opening the scriptures. You have made this matter very plain to me. Let the free-willer boast of his will and power as much as he will, God in that vision represents man destitute of both; and a soul dead to God, and buried in his own transgressions, can do no more toward his own spiritual resurrection than a dead corpse can do toward the resurrection of the body. God says he brings them out of their graves, and he puts his spirit in them; no call for this if a man hath will and power sufficient of his own. To the power of God, and the spirit of his grace, is ascribed the quickening and conversion of every saint in the Bible; but not one inspired penman in all God's book ever boasted  
of

of his natural will or power, or ever attributed any thing that accompanies salvation to either, but to the sovereign will and omnipotent power of God only.

*Cushi.* Why you begin to talk like an orthodox divine; that is a *sound speech that cannot be condemned.* Tit. ii. 8.

A free-willer can no more raise himself up, and go to the Saviour by his own power, than a dead corpse can raise itself out of the grave and go to the judgment seat. It requires more power to quicken and raise up a dead soul to spiritual life, than it does to raise up a dead body. The mouldered dust will make no more resistance than the passive earth did while God formed Adam; but the rebellious soul will resist to the last; like a desperate criminal under sentence, it will kill or be killed.

No sooner does the eye of justice dart a ray on the guilty conscience, but, like the Egyptians, he flies. *The Lord looked upon the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire, so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee.* Exod. xiv. 24, 25. Thus the sinner rebels against the light. Job xxiv. 13. *He that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh he to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd.* John iii. 20. Here is the strong opposition from the enmity of the mind; the poor sleeping dust of the body will never make this resistance. When the Lord speaketh, *Earth, disclose your blood, and no more cover your slain,* Isa. xxvi. 21, it is done; *they shall move out of*  

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*their*

*their holes like worms of the earth.* Micah vii. 17. Here is no more resistance than what the power of the worm represents. But when God comes to raise a dead soul, not only the understanding skulks from the light, but every faculty is engaged in the opposition. Let God give a positive command, and he receives an answer pregnant with the utmost resentment. *Son, go work to-day in my vineyard. He answered, and said, I will not.* Matt. xxi. 28, 29. Let a minister represent the excellency and suitability of a Saviour, and the answer is, *He hath no form nor comeliness, and when we see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.* Isa. liii. 2. Thus the carnal understanding shuns the rays of light, the mind discovers its enmity, the will expresses the utmost resentment, and the affections are altogether alienated from God, and fixed upon one idol or other; some dote on pleasure, others on wealth, others upon honour, others upon human learning, and all upon sin. Not one thought for God, until an almighty power take it prisoner, and by love make it a willing captive. *Our weapons are not carnal, but mighty, through God, to bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.* 2 Cor. iv. 5.

*Abimaaz.* Why, this is God's testimony of human frailty, and what every eminent saint in the bible has confessed and confirmed, by the long catalogue of their own sinful weaknesses. But is it not amazing that men will daringly give the testimony  
of



of God and his saints the lie, by crying up the will and power of fallen man, to believe, to come, and to close in with the Saviour ?

*Cushi.* As for the Saviour, they ought to leave him quite out of the question. If man is not fallen, there is no call for help ; if he be not dead, there is no need of the gift of eternal life ; if man has a will, no call for God to make him willing ; if he has a power of his own, no call for a divine power to be put forth ; and if he be not lost, no call for salvation by grace : but, alas ! they are like the Roman catholics, whose hearts may be compared to a field of battle, where pride and conscience are at war all the year round. Ask a papist how he is to be justified ? Pride answers, By works. Ask if he can keep the law ? The answer is, Yes ; and gave it an obedience that exceeds the command, even works of supererogation, more than the law requires. Ask conscience what she thinks of justification and acceptance with God by superabounding works ; and her answer will be this, You must judge of our heart by our actions. If we thought that our works would justify us, and bring in God himself a debtor to us (as we talk), we should not be at the pains of praying to thirty or forty mediators and intercessors ; nor should we buy pardons and absolutions, nor give such large sums to trading priests to pray us out of hell when we are dead ; you would hear nothing of this if all were right within ; therefore you must judge of our faith by

these fruits. Just so it is with an Arminian; let conscience gripe him, and he talks of righteousness of Christ and free grace; but if a few dead works make conscience lie quiet, then pride and selfwill contradict all that conscience said: this appears throughout all their writings. Thus they rebel in the face of truth, and oppose the verdict and sentence of their own thoughts and conscience. It requires a greater power to raise a dead soul to the life of faith, than to raise a dead body to life and action.

Lazarus, come forth! The command was instantly obeyed, though the body was fettered with a winding sheet. *He that was dead came forth bound band and foot with grave clothes; and his face was bound about with a napkin.* John xi. 43, 44.

Abimaaz. According to your account of popery and Arminianism, which you seem to view as one system, they are under the same contest that Nicodemus was his conscience told him that Jesus was the great Messiah; this he owned. *We believe that thou art a teacher come from God, for no man do the miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.* And yet his pride opposed his conscience; *Have any of the rulers believed on him?* and if I go to him for tuition, what becomes of my infallibility and reputation? Thus he stands at the strait gate, and his own pride made the strait. Had he obeyed the voice of the inward testimony that the Saviour's miracles produced, without consulting his reputation, *he would*

*would have been removed out of that strait into a broad place, where there is no straitness.* Job xxxvi. 16. But in order to keep up his reputation, and palm his conscience too, he acts the part of Guy Faux, goes by night, until he sees the crucifixion of the Saviour, and the judgments that attended his dying cry. Then he appears, and publicly owns the dead temple, though before ashamed to own the living God, that for above thirty years had dwelt in it, and displayed no less than omnipotent power from it. His pride procured him just cause for cutting regret.

*Abimaaz.* Indeed, my brother, *the fear of man bringeth a snare; but whose putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe.* Prov. xxix. 25. And I believe thousands have been, and still are, taken in that snare; *they love (as the Saviour says) the praise of men more than the praise of God.* John xii. 43. This is awful; as the Lord declares, that *whosoever shall be ashamed of him and of his words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he shall come in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.* Mark viii. 38. But do let me hear a little more of the Lord's proceedings with Prodigalis, for I dearly love to hear of converting work going on.

*Cushi.* Why, blessed be God, he is alive from the dead; as the Scripture says, *Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power.* Rev. xx. 6.

*Abimaaz.* Pray what do you suppose the Holy Ghost means by that text? Does he mean the pre-eminence of the saints at the general resurrection? or does he mean the saints rising to newness of life by the quickening power of the Holy Ghost at regeneration?

*Cushi.* Doubtless, the pre-eminence of the saints at the general resurrection is implied, because it is revealed, that *the dead in Christ shall rise first.* 1. Thess. iv. 16. The saint shall have the pre-eminence in that day. This their [wicked] way is their folly, yet their posterity approve their sayings; *like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them; and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning.* Ps. xlix. 14. Thus, you see, the dead in Christ shall rise first; the upright shall have dominion in that morning when the *Sun of righteousness shall arise; as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be.* Matt. xxiv. 27.

*Abimaaz.* Pray what is meant by the *dead in Christ*?

*Cushi.* There are two heads who represent all the offspring of Adam; and every individual dies a member in union with one of those heads. The man that believes in Christ, hath righteousness and strength in Christ; and, being joined to Christ, is of one spirit with him. *He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit.* 1 Cor. vi. 17. By virtue of this spiritual union, he is a part of the mystical body of Christ, and  
a member

*a member in particular.* 1 Cor. xii. 27. This union was from all eternity between Christ and the elect; but it is not revealed till regeneration. Blessed are they that follow the Lord *in the regeneration*; *they shall sit on thrones.* Matt. xix. 28.

As members of Christ by grace, and in union with him by the spirit, they live in this world; and as his members in union they accordingly die: hence they are said to die in him. *Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord from henceforth*; *yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.* Rev. xiv. 13. Persons thus departed are called by the apostle, *the dead in Christ.*

Christ is called the *second Adam, the Lord from heaven, the quickening spirit*; and those that die members of this heavenly head, are to be like him; *as is the heavenly [head], such are they also that are heavenly [members].* 1 Cor. xv. 48. *And as we have borne the image of the earthly [head before conversion], we shall also bear the image of the heavenly [head being converted].* 1 Cor. xv. 49.

On the other hand, Adam is the fallen head of all that are in the flesh, or in their first-born state, —never born again of the Spirit; hence they are called fleshly children; that is, *they that are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God.* Rom. ix. 8.

Christ and Adam are the two heads, the representatives of all the children of men. *And so it is*

written, *The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam a quickening spirit.* 1 Cor. xv. 45. These are the two heads; one is called *spiritual*, and the other *natural*, verse 46. Christ is the head of all the elect, they were chosen in him; and Adam is the head of all the reprobate. *The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven*, verse 27. Those that die in their first-born state, die members of fallen Adam, and are in the flesh, being destitute of the Spirit; such *are not the children of God*, but of the flesh; and *flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.* 1 Cor. xv. 50.

These are said not to fall asleep in the Lord, but to die, yea for ever. *If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die*, Rom. viii. 13; and if so, they die in their sins. This is the case with every unbeliever. *If ye believe not that I AM, ye shall die in your sins.* John viii. 24. These expressions I AM signify the self-existence, self-complacence, independence, and eternity of Jehovah the Saviour. The pronoun *I* excludes all others in point of dependence; and the word *AM* excludes both the past and the future tenses, and is expressive of his eternity. This name was revealed before the human nature was assumed—*And God said unto Moses, I AM that I AM; and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The Lord God of your fathers, the God*  
of

of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you; this is my name for ever, and this my memorial unto all generations. Exod. iii. 14, 15. The first verse includes the self-existence and eternity of our Saviour's deity; the second verse includes him as the God, the guard, and portion of all the faithful, as he was to Abraham; the portion of every heir of promise, as he was to Isaac; and of every prevailer with him in prayer, as he was to Jacob. His revealing himself the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, excludes Ishmael and Esau, to shew that he is not the God of the dead, but of the living. Matt. xxii. 32. This name the Saviour applies to himself—*If ye believe not that I AM, ye shall die in your sins.*

*Abimaaz.* You differ much in principles from the Arian.

*Cushi.* The Arian never knew the Lord, therefore he had better let him alone; his case is desperate; he has but one ground of hope left according to his own creed.

*Abimaaz.* Pray what is that?

*Cushi.* Why, if the Saviour's testimony be a lie, and if the whole Bible be false, there is ground of hope for him; but if God the Father's testimony be true, Heb. i. 8, if the Holy Ghost's witness be true, Matt. xxii. 43, 44, if the witness of angels be true, Luke ii. 11, and if the Saviour's witness be true, Rev. i. 8, he must be damned. *If ye believe not that I AM, ye shall die in your sins; and he that believes*

*believes not shall be damned.* Mark xvi. 16. Thus, if Father, Son, and Spirit, have borne a false testimony, there is hope for the Arian; but if a true one, he *has brought in a damnable heresy, even denying the Lord that bought us, and shall bring upon himself swift destruction.* 2 Pet. ii. 1.

*Abimaaz.* I beg pardon, my brother, for breaking in upon your discourse, but I observed that in your description of the two heads and representatives of the two families, which are called children of promise, and children of the flesh, you seem to differ in judgment from many learned men; I mean upon the apostle's words—*For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.* 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22. Many learned men from that text attempt to prove the death of all mankind in the first Adam, and the resurrection to life of all mankind in Christ the second Adam.

*Cushi.* If all die in Adam, there is not a soul in heaven; and if all are made alive in Christ, there is not a soul in hell. The preposition *in* implies *union*, and the particle *all* implies *members*. To handle the text otherwise is contradicting and giving the lie to a third part of the Bible. The elect do not die in Adam, for he never was the chosen head of God's elect, nor were the elect chosen in him; and although they fell in the first Adam, they are not restored in or by him; for they had life in the second Adam before ever they fell in the first. They  
that



that die in Adam, die eternally, for he is not the spiritual head ; and they that die in Christ live eternally, for he is their vital head ; God is not the God *of the dead, but of the living*. Whichever head a man dies in, he will rise in the image and order of that head ; *For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive : but every man in his own order.* 1 Cor. xv. 23. When the Saviour says to the wicked, *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels*, Matt. xxv. 41, will any man say that those are made alive in Christ ? And yet, upon a single particle the whole mystery of universal redemption is raised ; and the salvation of all the world established. But does not the Judge of quick and dead handle the text as I have done ? Does he not bless those that are in him, and curse those that are in Adam's fall ? If such a universal doctrine could be preached in hell, there is not a reprobate there but would give it the lie.

*Abimaaz.* You have satisfied me, my brother, and I see the Saviour on the judgment-seat confirms your sense of the text ; and, as the Saviour's decision justifies you, you cannot be wrong. Let men put what construction they will upon a text, if the Saviour contradicts it at the day of judgment, it is false.

But do let me hear a little more of Prodigalis ; we left him, if you remember, dead in the valley of dry bones ; and you promised to relate his spiritual

ritual resurrection, which I should be glad to hear, and whether there be any analogy between the first and the second resurrection.

*Cushi.* There is a just analogy. I have shewed you that a sinner is spiritually dead and buried from the prophecy of Ezekiel, even as the body is dead and buried in a grave of earth. An unbeliever, though a chosen vessel, is said to be asleep in his sins, as a dead body sleeps in the grave, and both must be awakened and raised. The Saviour speaks of both these, as it were, in one breath. Of the spiritual resurrection he speaketh thus—*Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is (come), when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live.* John v. 25. Of the resurrection of the body he speaketh after this manner—*Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.* John v. 28, 29. The dead bodies are to be alarmed by the sound of the archangel's trumpet; *For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God.* 1 Theff. iv. 16. A gospel minister is called an angel. Rev. iii. 1. Preaching the alarming word of God, is called sounding the trumpet. *Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain; let all the inhabitants of the*  
land

*land tremble ; for the day of the Lord cometh ; for it is nigh at hand.* Joel ii. 1.

This was the case with Prodigalis ; there came a watchman into the valley of dry bones and sounded the trumpet, which alarmed the conscience of the poor man—*he heard the sound of the trumpet.* Ezek. xxxiii. 5. Thus the dead soul is alarmed by the angel's trumpet, as dead bodies are to be. Secondly, the sleeping body is not only to be alarmed, but it is to be awakened, and brought to judgment.—*And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.* Dan. xii. 2. Thus the sleeping body is awakened and brought to judgment ; so in like manner is the sleeping sinner awakened and brought to the light, which is God ; for *God is light.*—*Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.* Eph. v. 14. Thirdly, the archangel's trumpet is to be attended with the powerful voice of the Saviour—*All that are in their graves shall hear his voice and come forth.* The gospel trumpet is attended by the same voice—*The time is now come when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God.*

Thus you see, that as the departed body is said to be dead, to be asleep, and to be in the grave ; so an unconverted soul is said to be dead, to be asleep, and to be in the grave also. In raising the body an angel is employed, Matt. xxiv. 31 ; a trumpet is sounded, 1 Cor. xv. 52 ; the Lord's  
voice

voice is heard, John v. 28 ; the body is alarmed, awakened, Dan. xii. 2 ; raised up ; 1 Cor. xv. 52 ; and brought to judgment, Eccl. xi. 9. So in raising a dead soul, an angel by office is employed, Rev. iii. 1 ; the gospel trumpet is sounded, Isa. xxvii. 13 ; the Lord's voice is heard, John v. 25 ; the soul is alarmed, Joel ii. 1 ; it is awakened, Eph. v. 14 ; raised, Eph. ii. 6 ; and brought forth to the light, and God is light, to be arraigned and chastened for his iniquity, that he may be justified here, and not condemned in the great day. *But when we are judged we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.* 1 Cor. xi. 32.

This was the case with Prodigalis ; his conscience was alarmed, his understanding awakened, and the Lord's voice quickened his dead soul to feel his guilt ; he was raised from his carnal security, and brought forth from a state of spiritual death and insensibility ; and after this he took his trial as really as any will do in the day of judgment. And at the general judgment, when the Judge is seated, *the books will be opened*, Dan. vii. 10 ; and so poor Prodigalis found at his trial : for both law, gospel, and conscience were point blank against him.

*Abimaaz.* Then, according to your account, there is not only a first and second resurrection ; but a first and last judgment also.

*Cushi.* There certainly is ; and the word justification implies a trial here ; the elect are tried  
in

in this life, and justified by faith in the Saviour. Hence they are said to *pass from death to life, and shall never come into condemnation*; which implies, that there was a ministration of death that they were arraigned at, and found dead under, and a sentence that they escaped; else how could they pass from death to life by faith, and for ever escape condemnation?

*Abimaaz.* I do not remember any passage of scripture that favours your opinion.

*Cushi.* I think there are many scriptures that favour it. *For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God; and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?* 1 Peter iv. 17, 18. In that text the destruction of Israel by the Romans may be implied, which was to begin at the temple or house of God; but Peter was no part of that, therefore more is intended by Peter's saying, *Judgment begins at us.* The destruction of the temple was a fulfilment of this prophecy—*Slay utterly old and young, both maids, little children, and women, and begin at my sanctuary.* Ezek. ix. 5, 6. Secondly, the arraignment and martyrdom of the saints may be implied in that text, but the spiritual judgment of the elect in this world is not excluded; nor is it excluded in the following text—*For, for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they*  
might

*might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the Spirit. 1 Peter iv. 6.*

The Lord hath often discovered himself as an angry judge to a sinner from the pulpit; and has spoke to his conscience by the preacher, sufficient to convince him of his awful state; even his inmost thoughts have been discovered and laid open, and he has found himself in the powerful hand, and at the very bar of God, convicted of all his crimes, the very sentence sounding in his ears, and his soul sinking into all the horrors of a condemned criminal; which has made him tremble no less than a condemned sinner will do in the day of judgment; as it is written, *But if ye prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so, falling down on his face, he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth. 1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25.*

Thus you see the operation of the word and spirit of God; when the Lord speaketh to the heart, the rebel is arraigned, judged, and condemned, both by law and conscience; and would sink to all eternity, if God did not impute an everlasting righteousness to him: but the chosen sinner has an advocate, and therefore his trial does not end in eternal death, but in a fatherly chastisement; as it is written—*But when we are judged we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world. 1 Cor. xi. 31, 32.*

*Abimaaz.* I would wish to hear the trial of Prodigalis, if my brother would relate it; and pray be so kind as to bring in the word of God to shew the consistency of his arraignment therewith; for you know that must be the touchstone that all things must be tried by;—even the spirit, the practice, and the principles of a believer must be tried by that.

*Cushi.* Very true; and I shall be glad to prove the trial, and the justification of this poor sinner, by that immutable standard. After Prodigalis had been alarmed, awakened, quickened to feel his guilt, and raised out of his dead state of carnal security, he gave himself wholly up to retirement and melancholy, as being fit company for none but those of the same cast. In one of his solitary walks he came to a lonely grove, which is well known to thousands; and having a clear view and a feeling sense of his lost estate, *he lift up his voice and wept; and he called the name of that place Bochim, Judges ii. 4, 5; and it is called the place of mourners to this day.*

At the end of mourning grove there is a little valley, and on the south side of it, at the foot of an hill, is a little enclosed spot, walled round, and planted with dwarf evergreens. Prodigalis attempted an entrance into it, but met with a rebuff, and had the gate shut against him. He then made an attempt to climb over the wall, but he felt himself sensibly resisted—*God resisteth the proud.* This

wrought such distraction and confusion in his mind, that he fainted away, and lay for some hours in a trance, during which time he had a vision. *He saw by night, and behold, a man riding upon a red horse, and he stood among myrtle trees that were in the bottom, and behind him were red horses spangled and white.* Zech. i. 8.

Prodigalis had the use of all his faculties ; but whether he was in the body or out of it, he could not tell. His mind was impressed with awful thoughts of the grand assize ; and the horses that he saw in the vision he took to belong to the retinue of his Judge, who was visiting those parts in his perpetual circuit. And indeed he was not mistaken, for the horses belonged to the chariots of God, and were a part of *the twenty thousand that always attended him.* Psalm lxviii. 17. The poor man was forcibly seized, and led in the vision by a strong hand to a lofty hill, the top of which was covered with a pillar of smoke ; the middle of it was all on a flame of fire, and just under the fire hung a heavy dark cloud ; before that cloud Prodigalis was placed ; nor was it in his power to move one step from it, *though he fain would have fled out of his hand.* Job xxvii. 22.

Out of the midst of that black cloud a supernatural light broke forth, and forcibly darted its beams on the whole soul of Prodigalis. As soon as this light shone upon him, all the corruptions of his heart boiled up, *as the fire causeth the water*



to boil. Isa. lxiv. 2.—*His iniquities were set before his judge, and his secret sins in the light of his countenance.* Psal. xc. 8. He saw himself in his true colours indeed; for his polluted soul was discovered in such a loathsome condition, that no leper was ever so corrupted in body as he appeared to be in soul; *from head to foot there was no soundness; all was wounds, bruises, and putrifying sores.* Isa. i. 6. He was a leper in the worse sense, and many *filthy rags he had laid on to cover his wounds.* Isa. lxiv. 6. But, alas, his *spiritual defilements*, and his *legal coverings*, were both of a piece, insomuch that he might truly be said to be *clothed with filthy garments.* Zech. iii. 3.

In this deplorable and most miserable condition he found an accuser standing close to him upon the right hand; and he infused into his mind such enmity against the light that shined, and suggested such evils and hard thoughts against the judge, as are shocking to mention. Thus stood Prodigalis, *clothed in his filthy garments*, filled with shame and confusion of face, even *before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him.* Zech. iii. 1.

In this perishing state, bitten with the gnawing worm of a guilty conscience, he found another enemy on his left side, threatening every moment to put a period to his existence; and if that had been permitted, he was sure that his accuser would gain an awful conquest over him, and an eternal

possession of him, No free-will, no human power, no self-righteousness can stand here;—Prodigalis found this;—these things blasted all his supposed power and free-will. *His strength was hunger-bitten, and destruction was ready at his side. This devoured the strength of his skin; the first-born of death devoured his strength.* Job xviii. 12, 13. Now I will leave you to guess at the sensations of Prodigalis; thus fixed in the presence of God, with all his sins in the light of God's countenance, covered with guilt and filth, Satan at his right hand, and destruction at his left.

*Abimaaz..* A deplorable state indeed; but this is not the case with all sinners.

*Cushi.* There is not an unconverted soul in the world, as the Lord liveth, but what is in this state, whether he know it or not; and this he will find in a dying hour,—his sins will stare him in the face,—destroying death will appear at his left hand, and Satan at his right, if he die out of Christ; and as sure as death cuts him off in his sin, so sure Satan seizes the prey, *he is delivered up to the tormentor,* and has a distant view of the burning throne of God —*Then shall the spirit return to God who gave it;* and receive the sentence, *Depart from me; I know ye not.*

Prodigalis being thus arraigned at the bar, with his accuser at his right hand, and his executioner on his left, his judgment proceeded. There appeared a man under the burning light, that took  
out

out a sort of post-bag, in which were the indictments of Prodigalis—*His transgressions were sealed up in that bag, God had sewed up his iniquity.* Job xiv. 17. And now the bag was brought forth, and unsealed—*And lo the roll of a book was found therein; and it was spread before him; and it was written within and without; and there was written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe.* Ezek. ii. 9, 10.

*Abimaaz.* Pray who was clerk of the peace? Who was he that read the indictment?

*Cushi.* Moses reads the indictments, enrolls the acts, and draws the process; but a man whose name is Conscience appeared as clerk of the assize, and produced many things that had been done in various circuits; he was clerk of the crown also, for he had framed and recorded many indictments, which were all now produced.

*Abimaaz.* Pray what was his indictment? Who had impeached him?

*Cushi.* There were several indictments against him. First, he was accused of transgressing all the laws of his sovereign; secondly, of private conspiracy and rebellion against the king's person; thirdly, of high treason; and, fourthly, of murder, &c. as shall be shewed in the process.—First, the roll of lamentation, mourning, and woe, was read in the order following: Thou art indicted, by the name of Prodigalis, for adhering to an unlawful sovereign, for *sin had reigned in his heart.* Rom. v. 21.—Thou hast been disloyal to the king,

and hast set up another in opposition to him—*he had set up an idol in his heart*, Ezek. xiv. 4 —Thou hast opened thy mouth against his majesty, and spoken lightly and vainly of his name and person. —Thou hast profaned the days of rest—the jubilee days—fast days—and all the days of festivity.—Thou art charged with disobedience to thy progenitors, and with the dreadful crime of murder ;—thou hast hated thy brother for his loyalty, which is murder conceived in the heart —Thou art charged with adultery, and with theft ; with speaking falsely of thy neighbour, and coveting his property after thou hadst wasted thine own. What sayest thou to these indictments ? Art thou guilty, or not ?

*Abimaaz.* Pray what did the poor soul say ? I have such a feeling for him, I long to hear his deliverance ; for I fancy myself at the very bar. Did he plead Not Guilty ?

*Cushi.* No, he could not do that, for the judge himself was a *swift witness against him* ; as it is written, *And I will come near to you to judgment ; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, the adulterers, and the false swearers.* Mal. iii. 5. Besides, Conscience, who was clerk of the crown, had framed and recorded many indictments against him ; for he had been privately arraigned and found guilty several times before ; therefore to plead innocent would have been giving the lie both to God and Conscience ; and who against these can be heard ?

He

He neither pleaded guilty nor innocent ; he held his hands before his face to hide his fallen countenance, and trembled at every joint ; for he had not (to his knowledge) one friend in all the court. The indictment was read, wherein he was charged with private conspiracy and rebellion ; this he could not deny, for the accuser who stood at his right hand was the very enemy that drew him into that conspiracy ; as it is recorded—*that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captives by him at his will.* 2 Tim. ii. 26.

*Abimaaz.* Why sure the cursed wretch did not drag the poor soul into rebellion, and then turn the king's evidence, did he ?

*Cushi.* He is one that can turn any way but the right ; he will swear and lie too for nothing. Howbeit the king stands in no need of his evidence, nor does he get his own neck out of the halter by all his turning. The rebellion that the prisoner was charged with was, that he had not only opposed the universal monarch himself, but that he had endeavoured to put the loyalists to shame—expose their obedience to contempt—and prosecute them for their close attachment to the crown and dignity of their rightful sovereign. His treason consisted in speaking evil of the king ; yea, he had even gone so far in his desperate rebellion, as to give him the lie to his face—for *he that believes not has made him a liar.* 1 John v. 10.

When the poor prisoner looked up and saw

Moses his accuser before him just under the judgment-seat, and Justice with his drawn sword close by him; Satan standing at his right hand, and Death at his left, his *spirit would have failed from before his judge, and the soul that God had made*, Isaiah lvii. 16, had he not been upheld by a divine power; for he knew that as soon as Moses had finished his accusation, the sentence must be passed; Justice would order the executioner to cut him down, and deliver the rebel to the tormentor, and then wo to him for ever. What to do he knew not; plead innocent he dared not; he was drove to his wit's end; his hair stood erect upon his head, and his heart was so pregnant with grief and horror, that he feared it would burst in his body. The burden of his sin, and the fear of death, overwhelmed him; for he knew that in the sight of his Judge *no flesh living could ever be justified*.

Moses began his accusation thus: Thou hast been a stubborn stiff-necked rebel ever since I knew thee. I had set before thee *life and death*, and told thee to choose life that it might be well with thee, and that thou mightest prolong thy days; but thou hast been one void of counsel, a perverse one, in whom is no faith. I told thee that thou shouldest find no rest for the soles of thy feet—that thy life should hang in doubt before thee—and that thou shouldest have no assurance of thy life; that the heavens should be iron over thy head, and the earth brass beneath thy feet; and that in the morning thou

thou shouldest say, Would God it were night ; and at night, Would God it were morning :—all these things thou knowest stand on record in my law. But thou hast cast all my words behind thy back, therefore thou must now expect the consequences—*Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them.* Deut. xxvii. 26. Dost thou think that the law shall be made void for thee ? Shall an eternal act be repealed to screen a rebel ? Shall a divine sentence be revoked ? Shall divine truth stand in derision, or be exposed to scorn and contempt, or charged with falsehood to save an enemy ? And shall immutability itself appear to change and waver, that a traitor may stand in judgment ? Nay, divine veracity hath affirmed that *it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away, than for one tittle of the law to fail.* Luke xvi. 17.

Now Justice began to vindicate truth and law. I have said, *that the soul that sinneth shall die.* Exod. xviii. 4. *My sword shall be bathed in heaven, and come down on Idumea, the people of my curse, to judgment.* Isa. xxxiv. 5. *Cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with hypocrites.* Matt. xxiv. 51. *Cut it down [I say], why cumbereth it the ground ?* Luke xiii. 7. Now his right hand accuser laid about him, as if he had almost *swallowed him up alive as the grave, and whole as they that go down to the pit.* Prov. i. 12. To be short, the poor prisoner could not persuade himself but that the execution was

actually begun, and that he was really sinking into hell itself.

*Abimaaz.* I never heard of so dreadful a trial in my life before ; do relate his deliverance,—for really I feel as if I was under the sentence myself. I cannot help weeping over him ; I find my very soul drawn out in love and pity toward him. I have such a love to him, and such a sense of his sufferings, that I could give all that I have in the world to have a sight of him.

*Cushi.* While Moses was thus accusing, Justice threatening, and Prodigalis sinking as he thought into the belly of hell, he lifted up his right hand and gave such a smite upon his breast as if he would have beaten the breath out of his body, and cried out, *God be merciful to me a sinner.* This was done with such fervour, and with such a strong voice, that it silenced every one in the court, except the devil, whose cursed breath is never spent. As for Moses, he had no more to say ; for he knew that *God would be gracious to whom he would be gracious, and that he would shew mercy to whom he would shew mercy.* *Exod. xxxiii. 19.*

Moses never accuses any man that pleads or calls for mercy ; nor did Justice proceed against this petition of Prodigalis ; for justice is in perfect harmony with mercy ; *they have met together and kissed each other long ago.* *Psal. lxxxv. 10.* Nor is Justice against the poor sinner that pleads for mercy in mercy's channel ; far from it ; for he says to such,

*I am*



*I am faithful and just to forgive sins, and to cleanse from all unrighteousness.* 1 John i. 9.

Moses insisted on perfect obedience, *and he accused for disobedience.* John v. 45. Justice called for death on the transgressor, and Death stood ready to execute the sentence, and Satan to torment the executed.

The prisoner having recovered himself a little, repeated his old petition (being determined to discharge the arrow that would fly), *God be merciful to me a sinner.* As soon as he had ended this lamentable cry, there came a person to him of singular beauty, *fairer [by far] than any of the children of men,* Psalm xlv. 2, and said, *Where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee?* John viii. 10. The prisoner could not speak, for *his words were swallowed up.* Job vi. 3. He still stuck to his text, and a third time repeated the old cry, if possible louder than ever, *God be merciful to me a sinner!* The glorious person looked very hard, both at Moses and at Justice. *And he answered and spake to those that [for they still] stood before him, saying, [I] Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him [the prisoner] he said, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.* Zech. iii. 4. And true enough he did; for he took him and washed him in the midst of the court, saying, *For I will cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed; for [I] the Lord dwell in Zion.* Joel iii. 21. And to the  
poor

poor soul he said, *If I wash thee not thou hast no part with me.* John xiii. 8.

Justice seeing this, stepped up and stood close by the Mediator, and acquiesced in the Saviour's wonderful act of clemency, saying, *I am faithful and just to forgive thee thy sins, and to cleanse thee from all unrighteousness.* 1 John i. 9. But Moses still kept looking about for a covering; for his law says, *And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the Lord our God, as he hath commanded us.* Deut. vi. 25.

Washing, under the ceremonial law, was not sufficient to recommend a soul to God; a perfect obedience to the moral law was required. Nor had a sinner any call for a ceremonial cleansing, if he had never transgressed the moral precept. The Saviour obeyed the law perfectly, and therefore wanted no sacrifice for himself; he offered himself, but it was for us.

The Lord Jesus seeing Moses so bent upon a righteousness to justify the sinner, as well as a purification, the Mediator answered and said, *I have magnified the law and made it honourable.* Isa. xlii. 21. *My obedience is sufficient to justify [him] and many [more].* Rom. v. 19. And to the prisoner he said, *Behold, I bring near my righteousness,* Isa. xlvi. 13, *and I will clothe thee from head to foot [with it].* Isa. lxi. 10. *And when Moses heard that he was content.* Lev. x. 20.

Then

Then said the Mediator, *Let them set a fair mitre upon his head; so they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments; and the angel of the Lord stood by.* Zech. iii. 5.

As soon as the Mediator had washed him, clothed him with his robe, and set the fair mitre upon his head, then he took the poor sinner by the neck, and held him forth before the devil. *And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan! even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?* Zech. iii. 2.

As soon as the devil saw that, he vanished like lightning falling from heaven. Luke x. 18. And there was heard a shout and a loud voice even from the celestial regions, saying, *Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ; for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night; and [Prodigalis] has overcome him by the blood of the Lamb. Therefore rejoice ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them.* Rev. xii. 10, 11, 12.

*Abimaaz.* My very soul is fired with love to the dear Redeemer; well may he be called our *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.* 1 Cor. i. 30. My soul is as if it was just delivered; surely I feel the blessed effects of that poor sinner's justification. O what a friend is the Saviour to the poor! Pray go on with the account.

*Cushi.* As soon as the Mediator had washed,  
clothed,

clothed, and crowned the poor prisoner, and had rebuked Satan the accuser, he then appeared at the right hand of Prodigalis, and stood as an advocate, in the very place where Satan the accuser had stood. Thus the Advocate displaced the devil. This made the prisoner cry out, *I will praise the Lord with my mouth; yea, I will praise him among the multitude. For he shall stand at the right hand of the poor, to save him from those that condemn his soul.* Psalm cix. 30, 31.

*Abimaaz.* Pray what said the great and terrible Name to this? he that spake out of the thick darkness, Deut. v. 22; you know he is a consuming fire? Heb. xii. 29.

*Cushi.* Why, the Mediator took Prodigalis in his right hand, and led him up, even before that great and terrible Name, as you call it; he led him up to him (I say), in his crown and robe, as he was, and said to his Father, *Behold me, and [one of] the children which thou hast given me,* Heb. ii. 13; and that great and terrible name appeared one of the most compassionate and tender Fathers that ever mortal heard of; for he rose up from his seat, and ran to him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, Luke xv. 20, and said, *This my son was dead and is alive again, he was lost and is found,* ver. 24. The poor soul cried aloud, seeing himself so unworthy of adopting grace, and said, *Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am not worthy to be called thy son,* ver. 21; and lift up his voice  
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and

and wept aloud. But the Father wiped his blubbered cheeks, saying, *And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying.* Rev. xxi. 4. Then said the Mediator to Prodigalis, *Be not afraid,* Mark v. 26, *for the Father himself loveth you, because you have loved me.* John xvi. 27.

The Father seemed to take particular notice of the robe that the Mediator had put upon poor Prodigalis, and smelled the smell of his raiment, and blessed him, and said, *See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which [I] the Lord have blessed. Therefore [I will] give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine. Let people serve thee, and [sinful] nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy [fleshly] brethren, and let thy mother's [base-born] sons bow down to thee: cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that bleisseth thee.* Gen. xxvii. 27, 28, 29.

*Abimaaz.* Why, the Father seemed as loving to him as the Mediator himself, who *was flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone.* Eph. v. 30. I cannot think how the poor soul could bear up under such unparalleled kindness and mercy. Astonishing love! But the Son's robe is pleasing to the Father; for he has ever pronounced a blessing on them *whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sin is covered* with that robe; and has promised never to impute sin to such again, nor charge their spirit with guile. Psalm xxxii. 1, 2.

*Cushi.*

*Cushi.* Indeed the Father seemed as fond of adorning him as the Mediator himself; for he did not think poor Prodigalis was fine enough. Therefore he said, *Put a ring on his finger, and shoes on his feet, and let us be merry.* Luke xv. 22, 23. He ordered likewise all the hosts of heaven to acquiesce in this his sovereign will; and said, *There shall be joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons [now in glory] that need no repentance.* Luke xv. 7. Nor was the Father of eternity himself silent when the celestial triumphs began: so far from it, that the Almighty's voice was as plainly heard in the anthem as the music and melody of all the rest. And indeed it must be so to fulfil the scriptures, which cannot be broken. *The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty: he will save; he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love; he will joy over thee with singing.* Zeph. iii. 17.

After the Father had kissed him, blessed him, ordered the ring on his finger, and the shoes on his feet, and had joined in the anthem at the reception of him, because he *had received him safe and sound*; the Saviour put one of the hands of Prodigalis into the hand of his heavenly Father, and held the other hand fast himself; then said the blessed Saviour to poor Prodigalis, *None shall pluck [thee] out of my hand; my Father is greater than all, and none is able to pluck [thee] out of my Father's hands.* John x. 28, 29. The Father having kissed him, he pointed

pointed him to his beloved Son, saying, *Go, kiss the Son; blessed are all they that put their trust in him.* Psalm ii. 12. And to his own Son he said, *It is my will that not one of these [poor] little ones should perish,* Matt. xviii. 14, but that thou *raise them up at the last day.* John vi. 39. Thus poor Prodigalis, the self-condemned sinner, was justified; and he that was *far off by wicked works, was made nigh by the blood of Christ.* And the enemy was reconciled to God by the death of his dear Son.

*Abimaaz.* You have given me a sweet account of the arraignment and justification of that poor sinner; of his glorious deliverance; and of the rebuke that Satan met with. But Destruction, the executioner, that stood at his left hand, you say nothing about; pray what became of him? for of all the enemies that poor fallen mortals are exposed to, he is none of the least; indeed he is one of the most formidable; for if he receives a commission to execute his office on the self-condemned criminal, he is gone for ever; he has no more part in any good thing that is done under the sun. The fatal die is cast, and the departed soul is exposed to every shaft that flies beyond the tomb. Blessed is that man that is *delivered from the arrow that flieth by day; he shall not be afraid of the terrors of [endless] night;* being cleansed from the spiritual pestilence that walketh in darkness; he is also *delivered from the destruction that wasteth at [the] noon [of gospel] day.* Psalm xci. 5, 6.

*Cushi.* Why, the Mediator said to Destruction, I came to deliver them who through the fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage, Heb. ii. 15; and as soon as he had said this, Prodigalis was not in the least afraid of him, but rather wished him to do his office, being persuaded that *all things were his, whether life or death.* 1 Cor. iii. 22. For as the sting of death was gone out of his conscience, he was not afraid of a phantom; for death is no more without his sting than a serpent is without his tooth. It is guilt that makes death formidable; without this he is a mere shadow without a substance. Psalm xxiii. 4. Indeed poor Prodigalis triumphed over him, saying, *O death, where is thy sting! O grave, where is thy victory! The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.* 1 Cor. xv. 55, 56. This is no more than the fulfilment of a glorious promise made by the dear Redeemer. *I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death. O death, I will be thy plague! O grave, I will be thy destruction! repentance shall be hid from mine eyes.* Hosea xiii. 14.

*Akimaaz.* I am wonderfully instructed; my very bowels yearn over the Father of all mercies, and the God of all comfort, for discoveting such bowels of mercy to poor returning sinners, who have wantonly abused his name, and ignorantly rebelled against the only friend they have in heaven or earth. Besides,  
my



my brother, we know God is self-complete,—happy, and eternally happy in his own perfections. Our praises or our presence in heaven can never add to divine felicity; nor can all the horrors of the damned discompose the Most High, disquiet his happiness, or in the least diminish his pleasure.

This being the real case, God's endearing characters, and unexpected condescension, when displayed; is the most affecting scene that can be exhibited upon a human spirit.

*Cushi.* True, my brother; and if poor souls who are brought to hope in the Saviour, did but consider the Almighty in those relative ties, and covenant characters, that (as a reconciled God and Father) he stands in to them, there would not be that servile disposition, that slavish fear that is in too many of them; nor that mercenary service that is performed by them, which is not at all to the honour of their benign Parent, nor to the honour or happiness of themselves; who are called a free and royal household; and their dignity, their liberty, their maintenance, their crown royal, and their enjoyment of it, is eternally secured, and that by their own Father; whose wisdom none can baffle, whose schemes none can frustrate, whose promise can never fail, and whose power cannot be resisted.

*Abimaaz.* Very true; but the Almighty does not give to all his children so conspicuous a deliverance as he did to Prodigalis: nor do I believe that all are justified in such a manner. I believe

myself to be justified by faith in the Saviour ; but I was not tried like him, nor delivered with all that explicit form that you have described.

*Cushi.* But you was ; and I will be bold to say, that if you was to go to the weakest babe in faith, and ask him, If he was not awed by the fear of death before hopesprung up in his breast ; he would tell you, Yes. Ask him, If evil thoughts were not suggested to his mind ; and he would tell you, They were :—here is Satan the accuser, and Death the executioner. Ask him, further, If the corruptions of his heart and his evil tempers were not discovered, and stirred up more than usual :—here is the eye of God ;—*Whatsoever maketh manifest is light.* Eph. v. 13. Ask him, If the law of God, when he read it, and his own conscience, when he examined it, did not accuse him :—if so, there is the clerk of the peace, the clerk of the crown, and Moses the accuser. And I will be bold to affirm that he never got rid of one of these accusers nor accusations but by faith in the name of Jesus. These are the sensible effects of the trial, though they may not be able, for the want of light and judgment, to describe it.

*Abimaaz.* Indeed, my friend, I can go step by step with your account of the sensations of Prodigalis ; but to save my life I could not describe my arraignment nor justification in the manner that you have.

*Cushi.* I know that the poor sinner is taken to task for all his transgressions ; they occur to his mind,

mind, one after another, as he is able to stand the indictments: nor are the thoughts of his heart neglected in the divine process; but when God *maketh inquisition for blood, he remembereth them, he forgetteth not the cry of the humble.* Psalm ix. 12.

And if any thing be not brought forth at the first arraignment, the poor sinner; when he has transgressed, goes to the bar again, *and is rejudged and chastened of the Lord, that he may not be condemned with the world.* 1 Cor. xi. 32. How often is a real believer cited to the bar, or obliged to cite himself; for an evil thought, or an hasty expression, because his quickened soul is susceptible of remorse; when the impenitent sinner shall hardly feel a check for all his abominable crimes, because he is dead: however, the former has an advocate, but the latter knows of none.

*Abimāaz.* I find that I agree with you in the feeling sense of the power, though I have not light enough to see eye to eye; but the *kingdom of God is not in word but in power.* I am sorry that I so often break in upon your conversation, and especially in a contradictory way; but your candour will excuse my intrusion. I am obliged, when I have raised all my objection, to go with the force of your arguments; for when you back your assertions with the word of God, both my conscience and experience carries me into your channel. I would wish to hear how the poor soul sound himself after his justification by faith, and reconciliation

myself to be justified by faith in the Saviour ; but I was not tried like him, nor delivered with all that explicit form that you have described.

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*Cushi.* I know that the poor sinner is taken to task for all his transgressions ; they occur to his mind,

mind, one after another, as he is able to stand the indictments: nor are the thoughts of his heart neglected in the divine process; but when God *maketh inquisition for blood, he remembereth them, he forgetteth not the cry of the humble.* Psalm ix. 12.

And if any thing be not brought forth at the first arraignment, the poor sinner, when he has transgressed, goes to the bar again, *and is rejudged and chastened of the Lord, that he may not be condemned with the world.* 1 Cor. xi. 32. How often is a real believer cited to the bar, or obliged to cite himself, for an evil thought, or an hasty expression, because his quickened soul is susceptible of remorse; when the impenitent sinner shall hardly feel a check for all his abominable crimes, because he is dead: however, the former has an advocate, but the latter knows of none.

*Abimāaz.* I find that I agree with you in the feeling sense of the power, though I have not light enough to see eye to eye; but the *kingdom of God is not in word but in power.* I am sorry that I so often break in upon your conversation, and especially in a contradictory way; but your candour will excuse my intrusion. I am obliged, when I have raised all my objection, to go with the force of your arguments; for when you back your assertions with the word of God, both my conscience and experience carries me into your channel. I would wish to hear how the poor soul found himself after his justification by faith, and reconciliation

with God. I dare say he thought that heaven itself was come down into his heart.

*Cusbi.* After he had received the sentence of justification, and the benediction of the Father and the Son (for they both blessed him), he was led into a lonely avenue, and had a true and humbling sight of the cross, that he might know how his justification was procured by his Surety; and likewise he was left to contemplate there which way it was that law and justice got satisfaction, *that God might appear just [to his law] as well as the justifier of [Prodigalis] that believed in Jesus.* Rom. iii. 26. The poor man never had so humbling a vision as this before; his soul was dissolved at the sight of the cross: the singular clemency of his Lord, exhibited in the mystery of his sufferings, overwhelmed him with humility; his eyes flowed with tears of love; his heart discharged every stream of gratitude; and his tongue encompassed his Lord with thousands of blessings and praises, till he might truly be said to *inhabit the praises of [that Israelite].* Psalm xxii. 3.

*Abimaaz.* I bless God I know by happy experience what the feelings of poor Prodigalis were: I have had a sight of the cross myself; and have felt the immortal love of him that *died the just for the unjust*: and I hope that the blessed impression that it left on my soul will never be defaced by the love of creatures. Surely the impression was divine;

vine; nature was passive under it, and happy in it; nor does the soul ever desire to lose the sense of it. But this is deemed mere folly and enthusiasm by the unenlightened part of mankind.

*Cushi.* It is such enthusiasm that every believer can give some reasonable account of, agreeable to divine revelation: whereas, on the other hand, if the greatest man of letters—one of the brightest parts and greatest ingenuity in a carnal state—was to attempt to mimic this power, an infant of days in grace would be able to detect the impostor. It is one of the secrets that is with the righteous; and all other secrets essential to salvation are included in it.

This I have often observed, that when a letter-learned atheist has taken pen in hand against a treatise of divinity, he has acted just as an ignorant bully would do with a reasonable man, discharged the vulgar spleen of his heart at the book, though never able to overthrow or disprove one truth contained in it, with either sense or reason on his side: so that his bolt has only served to disclose the rebellion of his heart, and betray his ignorance of his Maker.

*Abimaaz.* If God hides his mysteries from the wise and prudent, they can do but little with them. No man can counterfeit a thing that he has no idea of; nor can he disprove what he doth not understand. If the Messiah hides his mysteries from a man, he has no knowledge of them; therefore he

can never counterfeit them, nor disprove them. Such a man may be counted wise while he keeps silence; *even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise; and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding.* Prov. xvii. 28. *Wisdom is too high for him,* Prov. xxiv. 7; therefore if he meddle with it, *he layeth open his folly.* Prov. xiii. 16.

But do give me a further account of Prodigalis; for it is the power of religion that warms the heart, as speaketh the Psalmist, *They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power; to make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom.* Psalm cxlv. 11, 12.

*Cusbi.* After Prodigalis had been indulged with a saving view of the cross, he lived some time in that open vision, until his soul was so meekened and humbled under that affecting scene of tragedy, that he died to all earthly comforts and earthly things. The charms of his wife, the pleasures that he had taken in his children, the pleasures of company, the blessings of health, the blessings of sleep, and the blessings of food, were all insipid and unfavoury to him. Infinite fullness had entertained him with such divine satisfaction, that there was no room for a second course; God was all in all. And though God has made every thing beautiful in its season, yet there was but one object beautiful and seasonable to him.

For many months he lived in this open vision, and spent his time in the pleasing element of silent solitude,



solitude, until he pined after heaven, as the infant just weaned doth after its mother's breast. He was like the Psalmist; *As the hart panteth after the water brook, so panted his soul after God.* Psalm xlii. 1.

*Abimaaz.* This is the blessed state of a restored soul; and he can do no less than love God with all his heart, with all his soul, with all his mind, and with all his strength. The man sees his own salvation so precious, and himself such a debtor to grace, that the united efforts of every mental power are not sufficient to express the high obligation that such are under to God, nor the love and gratitude that is due to him.

*Cushi.* Why, you talk like a sound divine; that is a most gracious speech, and a very true one. Howbeit, after Prodigalis had been long indulged with this vision of the cross, it began in time to grow dim in its lustre, and to get more remote from view; and its appearing at a greater distance, caused the sensations thereof to abate in proportion: but the Saviour sent him another Comforter, who gradually opened to his understanding the sacred and profound mysteries of the Holy Trinity; and led him up to the eternal council of Father, Son, and Spirit, in the economy of man's salvation. These things afforded him fresh entertainment: and no wonder; for such astonishing and establishing views led the poor soul into joys unutterable: so that he rejoiced as much in the resurrection

resurrection and glorification of the Son of God, as he had before mourned at the visions of his unparalleled sufferings and death. The blessed Spirit shined like the sun on his understanding—revived his drooping heart—influenced his mind with life and peace—set his affections in a flame for God—and informed his judgment respecting those things which are hid from the wise and prudent. In short, he had a glimpse of almost all the essential mysteries. Mark iv. 11. This kindled a becoming zeal within him, and made his heart overflow with *joy unspeakable and full of glory*. Thus he was *washed in the regeneration, and renewed by the Holy Ghost, which was shed upon him abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour*. Tit. iii. 6. *He was a new creature indeed; old things were passed away, and all things became new*, 2 Cor. v. 17; *his flesh seemed fresher than a child's, and he returned to the days of his youth*. Job xxxiii. 25. This made him desire no longer to appear *as a candle under a bushel, or under a bed, but he wished to appear on a candlestick, that others might see the light*. Matt. v. 15.

He began to speak cheerfully of divine things to his wife, family, and friends—the law of kindness was under his tongue; his conversation was favourable and powerful, and his zeal and knowledge was accompanied with a public spirit. He became a lively companion to those who had any reverence of their Maker—a warm reprover of the

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the wicked—an informer of the misled—a keen detector of errors—a sound scriptionian—a son of consolation to a wounded spirit, and a conspicuous prevailer with God in prayer. The order of his family visibly reflected the religion of his heart; he endeavoured to train his children up to useful learning; to make them dexterous at their pen—good accomptants—good grammarians—excellent readers—good geographers, &c. &c. and to inform their judgment in these things, as well as to load their minds with great swelling words of vanity. These things, when accompanied with a becoming prudence, and good sense, make persons shine like stars in their own native country.

Prodigalis never suffered his daughters to learn to dance, to swell their breasts, or to stretch their necks with the cursed air of wantonness. He knew by woful experience the craft of the devil, and that he would use every effort to get at their hearts and destroy their souls, without his giving him a clue. Nor did his wife gad about with a dress upward man and downward woman, as if they were a kind of mermaids,—with a man's hat and wig and a woman's apron and a petticoat—a dress becoming none but hermaphrodites. How odious does it look to see men imitate women, with a back to their coat after the fashion of French stays, and bows of ribbon to their shoes, like misses in their teens; while the women wear not only the beaver and the wig, but the coat and waistcoat also:—*The woman*

*shall*

*shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment; for all that do so are abomination unto the Lord thy God.*

Deut. xxii. 5. God has excluded the cottish man from his kingdom—*Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate.*

1 Cor. vi. 9.

I used to wonder what could be the reason of so many divorces and elopements among our married nobility; but it is not to be so much wondered at, when we see so many act like the king of Babylon—dress the wife up for a show, and call for others to admire her, until her heart is imprisoned to one of her admirers; then she quits her husband, and sets her favourite to law with the injured man for a separate maintenance; and if she carries the suit, which is often the case, then she keeps her humble servant at the expence of her injured husband. One would think these were all Nicolaitains, and that they were determined to have all things common. However, *God will certainly visit for these things, and his soul will be avenged on such a nation as this.* Jer. v. 9.

Prodigalis acted not so; he endeavoured to lead his family in that way where he was the most likely to meet with the blessing of his God. He used the means appointed, did his duty in his station, and left the event to his God;—nor did his family like him the worse for it; for they saw the hand of  
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God so visibly with him, that they feared him as his servant, and revered him as a tender and gracious father.

*Abimaaz.* The man that puts his trust in God, will surely be defended and honoured by him; for he is a wall of fire round about them that fear him, and they will surely burn themselves that attempt to oppose him; and, as you justly observe, God will avenge the violation of his laws;—matrimony is God's institution, himself is concerned in it, and he will punish the violators of it, as contemnners of him. But do proceed with your account of Prodigalis;—as for the base proceedings of the ungodly, they can afford us no entertainment, unless it be to set us to wondering at the discriminating grace of God, that has caused us to differ. I suppose that you look upon the glorious renewing of the poor prodigal to be his new birth, do you not?

*Cuspi.* Certainly I do. After Prodigalis *believed, he was sealed with that holy spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance.* Eph. i. 13. And born of God he certainly was, for every faculty of his soul was *renewed by the Holy Ghost,* Tit. iii. 5; and *that which is born of the Spirit is spirit, as that which is born of the flesh is flesh.* John iii. 6. He was enabled to believe in the Saviour to the salvation of his soul; and he is a *child of God by his faith.* Gal. iii. 26. His father received him graciously, and blessed him, which is a sufficient proof of

of his being *predestinated to the adoption of sons*. Eph. i. 5. Besides, God the Father called him his son when he said, *This my son was dead and is alive again, he was lost and is found*; and, because he is a son, *God has sent forth the spirit of his Son into his heart, crying, Abba, father*; wherefore he is no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir; an heir of God through Christ. Gal. iv. 6, 7.

*Abimaaz*. Pray, my brother, shew me some scriptural criterions of a child of God; and as you say a son is an heir of God and a joint heir with Christ, do explain them to me, for I have had many doubts, fears, and temptations about my interest in these things; though I believe, by the access that I find to God in prayer, and by the familiarity that I am indulged with, that the whole of them are in my heart.

*Cushi*. If I can be of any use to establish and settle thy judgment, I shall be very willing to serve thee, according to my abilities; for I know that a gifted man is as much accountable to God for the husbandry of his gift, as the wealthy man is for the husbandry of his wealth; both are stewards, and both are accountable to their master; for God is the God of providence as well as of grace; and the father of creation, as well as of regeneration.

When God brings a poor penitent sinner into his family, he makes him sensibly feel a reconciliation take place between God and him. His conscience, which before was the seat of strife, becomes the  
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principality of divine peace. All the elect are pre-ordained to this *peace and reconciliation*, Isa. xxvi. 12; hence they are called sons of peace, even before peace be revealed to them. *Into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house; and if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it; if not, it shall return to you again.* Luke x. 5, 6. Secondly, such are enabled to call God father, with the testimony of the word, the Holy Ghost, and conscience on their side—*Thou shalt call me my father, and shalt not turn away from me.* Jer. iii. 19. This they are enabled to do by the Spirit—*because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, father; wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son.* The poor prodigal claimed this privilege in the far country—*I will arise and go to my father; and God' owns him—this is my son.* Thirdly, their sonship is often made plain, and cleared up to them, by sharp trials and conspicuous deliverances, by severe chastisements and strong consolations. *My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him; for whom the Lord loveth he rebukes and chastens, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth; if ye are without chastisements, of which all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not.*

Fourthly, their sonship is made plain to them by the love of God that is shed abroad in their hearts; which encourages them to a holy freedom  
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with God—finding at times their doubts and fears removed ; infomuch that their faith seems settled. A sense of love casts out servile fear, and gives a man a holy boldness at a throne of grace ; and faith works powerfully by love, for *he that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.* 1 John iv. 7. Thus he may prove his spiritual birth, and his saving knowledge of God, by the love that he feels to him ; and though at times the young Christian may find the love of God greatly abate, according to his feelings, so that he cannot rejoice as usual, yet even then it may be perceived ; because nothing in this world will repair the loss to him, nothing will fill the vacancy ; his heart is still breathing after God ; and truth hath said, that *where his heart is there is his treasure.* Matt. vi. 21.

Fifthly, he finds a real love to God's family more than to all earthly friends and relatives, however near by blood. A divine tie is by far stronger than all the ties of nature ; and when this is the case with a poor soul, it is a plain proof that his carnal enmity is slain, and that reconciliation has taken place by the Spirit. John brings it in as a proof of divine life—*We know that we are passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.* 1 John iii. 14.

Sixthly, his sonship appears by the reverence and respect that he has for the word and worship of God. God's house is his Bethel ; the promises are sweet to him ; blessed entertainment and sweet satisfac-



faction, he often finds in them ;—and as he finds life and comfort in the word, he may say, with the Psalmist, *This is my comfort in my affliction, for thy word hath quickened me.* Psalm cxix. 50. It is common for an heir to love his inheritance ; and so does the believer, who is an heir of promise. Heb. vi. 17.

Seventhly, if any part of God's word goes against the weak believer, so that it discovers his sins, and wounds him in the tenderest part, yet he will not flee from it ; he comes to the glass that discovers his deformity, and seeks the very sword that wounds him ; while the false heart shuns the rays of truth, and skulks into the gloomy shades of darkness, as best suiting his complexion ; *they hate the light, nor will they come to it, lest their deeds should be reprov'd. But he that doeth the truth cometh to the light, that his deeds might be made manifest that they are wrought in God.* John iii. 21. This proves the believer to be a child of light, because he loves it, comes to it, and seeks direction from it. *While ye have the light believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light,* John xii. 36 ; and as they are children of light, so they are heirs ;—*heirs of God* (who is light), *and joint heirs with Jesus Christ* (the true light). Rom. viii. 17.

*Abimaaz.* Blessed be God, I have felt more or less the operation of all your scriptural criterions ; and I see my sonship as clear as the noon-day. But do give me a little account of the believer's inheritance ; for I am determined to keep your heart

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springing,

springing, and your tongue going, if asking questions will do it. But, before you begin to describe the believer's inheritance, be so kind as to shew me whether a soul thus justified, and adopted into the family of God, be for ever delivered from condemnation:—Have patience with me, my brother, for possibly I never may be favoured with such an opportunity again.

*Cusbi.* As soon as Prodigalis was cleansed, enrobed, and crowned, you know that both law and justice were on his side. The holy law, and sin-avenging justice, are those that the guilty sinner is afraid of. As for Moses, he was content as soon as the Saviour put the robe on him; and he must be so, or else contradict his own law:—*Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh living be justified in God's sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe. Rom. iii. 20, 21, 22.* Thus you see this righteousness is *witnessed by the law itself*, and from the mouth even of Moses; for Christ is the *end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth*: for Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man which doeth those things shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith [Moses] speaketh on this wise: Say not in thine heart, Who shall

*shall ascend into heaven? that is, to bring Christ down from above; or, Who shall descend into the deep? that is, to bring Christ again from the dead. But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that is, the word of faith which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. Rom. x. 4—11.*

Thus Moses preached up an imputed righteousness; speaks of the faith of it, and of the confession of it, and bears witness to it; and if he disapproves of the righteousness of faith, he is against his own testimony, and is no longer worthy the name of a faithful servant, because he finds fault of his Lord and Master's righteousness; but that be far from Moses, for *is the law against the promise of God? God forbid. Gal. iii. 21.*

Moses himself was not justified by works in the sight of God, no more than we are; hence he is enrolled among the believers. We all know that Moses killed the Egyptian, and that was enough to condemn him for ever by his own law; he had no other shelter from the avenging sword of justice than the blood of Christ. *Through faith [Moses] kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that*

*destroyed the firstborn should touch them. Heb. xi. 28; By faith [Moses] refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, Heb. xi. 24, 25; for he had respect unto the recompence of reward, ver. 26. What reward was that? why the reward promised to Abraham—it could be no other. And did Moses expect that reward by works? No; for if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise. Gal. iii. 18. For the promise that Abraham should be the heir of the world, was not to him or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect; because the law worketh wrath. Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed. Rom. iv. 13—16.*

Thus you see we have made shift to bring even Moses himself on our side of the question, and we have done right; for it was not the legal works of Moses that God commends, but his faith—*Moses is faithful in my house*. And it was to the comfort of Moses, as well as to us, that the Lord proclaimed his name before him—*the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth. Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin.* Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7.

The way that Moses found access to God, was  
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by faith in a Mediator ; and to free grace revealed he found access ;—*And the Lord said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken ; for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name.* Exod. xxxiii. 17. Moses is a sworn enemy to self-righteousness, and preaches it down as much as Christ (his master) did in his days ; and shews plainly that there is no entering into rest by that, nor for that :—*Speak not thou in thine heart* [here he condemns the thought of it] *after that the Lord thy God hath cast them out from before thee, saying, For my righteousness the Lord hath brought me in to possess this land.* Deut. ix. 4. Again, *Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart, dost thou go to possess their land,* ver. 5. And again, *Understand therefore, that the Lord thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness ; for thou art a stiff-necked people,* ver. 6. If the thought of meriting an earthly inheritance be condemned, what shall we say of them who not only think, but boast of meriting an eternal inheritance by their own righteousness ?

*Abimaaz.* God bless thee, my brother, thou hast cleared that point up to my satisfaction. I see clearly that the righteousness of Christ is that in which all the elect stand justified before God ; it is witnessed both by the law and the prophets ; and as for the gospel, that reveals no other :—*I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for therein is the righteousness of God revealed.* Rom. i. 17 And find-

ing Moses himself justified by the righteousness of faith is a very comfortable thought to me. I see clearly that the law can never find fault with the Saviour's righteousness, which is upon every believer; nor can it demand a better, nor condemn or curse the man that has laid hold of it; for, as the scriptures say, *he that believeth is justified freely from all things.* O how safe is the poor sinner under this robe! *Blessed is the man whose iniquity is forgiven, whose sin is covered.* Yea the Saviour himself declares, *that he that believeth is passed from death unto life, and shall never come into condemnation;* and Paul speaks the same thing—*there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.* Rom. viii. 1.

Thus I see that a soul stands just in the presence of God, and in the light of the law, by faith in an imputed righteousness; which Paul calls the obedience of the Saviour:—*Even so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous,* Rom. v. 19; yea, all the elect, *for in him shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.* Isa. xlv. 25. And we are for ever justified in the eye of Justice by faith in the Redeemer's blood; and consequently Justice can never demand of the believer the penal sum, which is eternal death. Surely God hath *commended his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.* Much more then, *being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.* Rom. v. 8, 9. Thus I see I stand just before the law, by faith in  
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the Saviour's obedience; and just in the seven-fold eye of justice, by faith in the Saviour's blood; and if so, *I am justified freely from all things, from which I could not be justified by the law of Moses.* Acts xiii. 39. But I have heard people, and even divines, say, that our sins will appear at the day of judgment, though we are pardoned; I wish you would rectify this matter. I am to you as the queen of Sheba was to Solomon—*I come to prove your wisdom with hard questions.* 1 Kings x. 1.

*Cusbi.* For my part, I hope ever to go by what God says in his word, not by what men say. God says of every believer, that *he is complete in Christ the head,* Col. ii. 10, and *that he will not impute their trespasses unto them,* 2 Cor. v. 19; that *he will cast all their sins into the sea,* Micah vii. 19; that *he will remember them no more,* Jer. xxxi. 34; that *he sees no sin in Jacob, nor perverseness in Israel.* Numb. xxiii. 21. And again, *In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found; for I will pardon them whom I reserve.* Jer. l. 20. If I was to owe a man fifty pounds, and a surety stepped forth and paid the sum, is not that debt cancelled? Is not the book discharged? And have I not got the bill and receipt in full of all demands in my pocket? And would it not be an unkind, and an unjust act in such a creditor to be perpetually producing that old debt to my view, in the presence of all company? would it not be con-

temptuous? And what credit could such an one get by such an action? Would not the book itself, being discharged, condemn his folly? And who but a novice would charge the Judge of all the earth with this? God blesses every poor sinner that believes in his dear Son. Justice says, *I am faithful and just to forgive your sin, and to cleanse you from all unrighteousness.*—Moses is content.—And Christ says, *thou art all fair, there is no spot in thee.* Song iv. 7.

*Abimaaz.* But some say, it will be done to magnify the grace of God, and to shew how grace hath pardoned the greatest of sins.

*Cushi.* Justice does not demand this, nor require it in all the Bible. Besides, it would admit of that which God excludes; it would have the appearance of upbraiding, which the word of God admits not. *God giveth liberally and upbraideth not.* James i. 5.

As justice does not require it, and as upbraiding is excluded, it can only be done to gratify devils and sinners, which God will never do. I read, that the mystery of iniquity is to be revealed to the righteous; but I never read that the mysteries of grace are to be revealed to the damned. *The manifold wisdom of God is to be made known by the church to principalities and powers in heavenly places,* Eph. iii. 10, but to no other. A purged conscience, the law of God written in the heart, and the testimony of God's Spirit, is a receipt in full of all the  
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above-mentioned demands. And the poor sinner, who has long laboured under a sight and sense of his sins, frequently finds, that after God has removed his transgressions from his sight, and purged his conscience, that himself, even in a fit of unbelief, is not able so much as to bring his sins fresh to his remembrance again; they are blotted out as a cloud, they are buried, nor can the devil or unbelief raise them up and bring them to life again. Not a single sin shall appear against the poor believer in the judgment day; he shall rise in his Saviour's image; *He shall be like him, for he shall see him as he is.* 1 John iii. 2. *He shall have boldness in the day of judgment.* 1 John iv. 17. *He shall be presented holy and unblameable and unreproucheable in God's sight.* Col. i. 22. *He shall rise first*, and appear in the Saviour's likeness, before the wicked be raised at all. 1 Thess. iv, 16,

*Abimaaz.* I am coming again with another knot; for I am determined to bring every puzzling experience, and every puzzling providence forth; not a perplexing scripture, not an entanglement in my judgment, will I leave unriddled, if God will enable me to bring them forth, and you to explain them. But I dare say I shall think of twenty things after you are gone, that I shall now forget. But to the matter in hand. You know that Paul says we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ;—*For we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live,*  
*said*

*saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Rom. xiv. 10, 11, 12. And again, For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. 2 Cor. v. 10. Here, first, Paul declares that we must all appear before the judgment-seat; secondly, every knee must bow, and every tongue confess to God; thirdly, every one must give an account of himself to God; and lastly, that every one may receive the things done in his body, whether good or bad. Be as plain as possible on the subject; for if you leave but a vacancy as big as a button hole, unbelief will creep in, and drag a thousand doubts at her heels.*

*Cushi. Observe, first, the direction given by the lawgiver to the judge. If there be a controversy between men, and they come unto judgment, that the judges may judge them; then they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked. Deut. xxv. 1. And again, If a man trespass against his neighbour, and an oath be laid upon him to cause him to swear, and the oath come before thine altar in this house; then hear thou in heaven, and do, and judge thy servants, condemning the wicked, to bring his way upon his head; and justifying the righteous, to give him according to his righteousness. 1 Kings viii. 31, 32. Here you have the unalterable and eternal rule of judgment. In this rule*  
you

you find two sentences, and no more—justification and condemnation—thou shalt condemn the wicked—thou shalt justify the righteous. Now the effects or consequences of these two sentences are two also, a blessing and a curse; the law reveals no more, Deut. 28; read the whole chapter. The blessings are to those that hearken to the voice of the Lord in the gospel, and the curses are to the legal self-righteous tribe, that trust in their obedience to the law, to which they adhere for life, because they cannot fulfil the whole of it;—*As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse*, Gal. iii. 10; and, on the other hand, I have proved the believer to be under the blessing; *so then they which be of faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham*. Gal. iii. 9.

I have already shown that the believer is justified, consequently under the sentence of justification; and the glorious effect of this is, that he is blessed; yea, he is blessed both by the law and the gospel; God the Father blesses him; *Kiss the Son lest he be angry; blessed are all they that put their trust in him*. Psalm ii. 12. He is blessed also of God the Saviour;—*Because thou hast seen me, Thomas, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed*. John xx. 29. This blessing is likewise pronounced by the Holy Ghost;—*Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord; yea, saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them*. Rev. xiv. 13. This being the real case, the sentence of justification, and the blessing

annexed to it, follows the believer go where he will.

Having shewed you the rule of judgment, the sentence and the blessing, I come now to speak of the judgment-seat. I have already proved, by the trial of Prodigalis, that the elect are arraigned and tried before the judgment-seat in this world; that the light of God shines upon them; that the commandment comes with power; that sin revives, and the sinner, feeling the sentence thereof, dies; that law, conscience, and Satan accuse him; and that by faith he is justified, and passes from the sentence of death to spiritual life by faith in the Son of God: as it is written, *I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead yet shall he live; and he that liveth and believeth shall never die.* John xi. 25, 26. Thus you see the elect soul is arraigned and acquitted in this world by an act of grace.

Secondly, Every time he sins against his Father and Redeemer, having the law of God and the rule of judgment written on his heart, he arraigns himself; this is his privilege, which if he neglects God does it: *If we would judge ourselves we should not be judged; but when we are chastened we are judged of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.* 1 Cor. xi. 31, 32.

Thirdly, The believing soul may appear before the judgment-seat of Christ as soon as it is severed from the body; *for the spirit returns to God that gave*

gave it. Eccl. xii. 7. But supposing this be the case, the believing soul can receive nothing but the sentence of justification, and the blessing annexed to it; *Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord*: but this is all supposition; for the Bible is silent about it to the best of my remembrance. It is said of Lazarus, that *he was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom*, Luke xvi. 22; and of the thief, that he should be that day with the Lord in paradise. Luke xxiii. 43. But there is nothing said of a trial between death and eternal glory. Yet doubtless the Saviour will present every believing soul before his Father at their arrival in heaven; but if he does, it will be without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing: and if so, it can be only to receive the Father's blessing; which will be no worse than that which the poor soul met with on his repentance; namely, the *Father fell on his neck and kissed him, and rejoiced over him with singing*.

Fourthly, If we are all to appear before the judgment-seat of Christ in the great day, as the apostle intimates, it will be only to be exalted to the right hand of the Lord: *And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, and the goats on the left*. Matt. xxv. 33. And whatever account a believer is to give of himself to God, I believe the Saviour, as his only Advocate, will instruct him in it: *The meek will be guide in judgment, and the meek will be teach his way*. Psalm xxv. 9. And the chief account that he will have to give at that day will be

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an account of his unworthiness, and to wonder at the grace of his incomparable Lord: *Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father* [mark the blessing here]; *inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.* Matt. xxv. 34. Now mind the Saviour's process, *For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat; thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me.* Matt. xxv. 35, 36. Now comes the account that the saints give of themselves to God, which consists of a public renunciation of all usefulness to God, and of all dependance on merit: *Then shall the righteous* [mind the appellation] *answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? when saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?* Matt. xxv. 37, 38, 39. Thus the Lord justifies the righteous. Mind, he calls them righteous, which they could never be but by faith; for *he that believes not is condemned already.* Nor need we wonder at the Lord's putting encomiums on their works, for it was himself that *worked in them both to will and to do of his own good pleasure.* Phil. ii. 13. The Lord had wrought all their works in them, Isa. xxvi. 12, and he takes special notice of, and puts great encomiums upon them. But the righteous place no confidence in them, but renounce them,

them, with an humble confession of their unworthiness : *And they were justified when they spoke, and cleared when they thus judged* [of themselves]. Psalm v. 4. Thus you see, instead of the sins of the just being exposed, he brings forth every work of righteousness ; every fruit of faith and labour of love.

Thus I have answered three things in your question. And I suppose Satan has been tempting thee to think that thou shalt be covered with shame and confusion, either at death or at thy entrance into heaven, or at the great and terrible day ; and his temptations have driven thee to make this earnest inquiry ; which is easily answered : for if there be in the word of God any thing relating to your inquiry which I have not brought forth, this text is sufficient to answer it, either at an hour of death or at the day of judgment : *But Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation ; ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded, world without end.* Isa. xlv. 17.

The last part of your question is, What is meant by *every man receiving according to the works done in the body, whether good or bad* ? Here are two sorts of works, *good and bad* ; which Paul calls *the fruits of the Spirit, and the works of the flesh*. *The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance ; against such there is no law.* Gal. v. 22, 23. *Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, Adultery, fornication, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance,*  
*emulations,*

*emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, &c. &c. they that do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.* Gal. v. 19, 20, 21.

Thus you see the world is divided into two classes—sheep and goats : and there are two sorts of fruits—those of the flesh and those of the Spirit : so likewise there are two covenants—one of grace, and the other of works : so also there are two sentences—that of justification, and that of condemnation. The effect of justification is the blessing of God ; and the effect of condemnation is the eternal curse of God. A blessing and a curse will close the scene in the great day, and finally conclude the mystery of God. Rev. x. 7.

As a *just God and a Saviour* the Judge will appear, and both classes will be *judged according to their works* : *those that sow to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption ; and they that sow to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.* Gal. vi. 8. Thus every man shall *receive according to the things done in the body ; according to that he hath done, whether good or bad.* 2 Cor. v. 10. If he be a believer, he is blessed with faithful Abraham ; if he be a hoping soul, he shall not be ashamed of his hope, but shall enjoy his expected inheritance, after his patience is tried in *looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.* Titus ii. 13.

O how thankful ought a soul to be at the thought of the blessed Lord's appearing to *give a reward*



*reward to his servants the prophets, and to all that fear his name, small and great.* Rev. xi. 18. While, on the other hand, he that dies in the flesh is not one of the children of God; for he dies in his sin, not in the Saviour, and dying in unbelief, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. For my part, I know of no other sorts of fruits or works but these two; and all the human race are bringing forth one or the other, according to the state they are in, and the covenant they are under; nor is there any middle state between them.

*Abimaaz.* For my part I am satisfied. *Bless the Lord, O my soul! and all that is within me bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul! and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies.* Psalm ciii. 1, 2, 3, 4. Pray now go on with the description of the blessed inheritance.

*Cushi.* That is more than man or angel can do: but the book of God mentions it: God the Father hath promised to be our God: *At that time, saith the Lord, will I be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people.* Jer. xxxi. 1. This implies that God will be the portion of his people. *Fear not, Abraham, I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward.* Gen. xv. 1. Thus the Lord is the portion of his people, and Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. Deut. xxxii. 9. This glorious portion is to

be known, and to be enjoyed by every believer at last. For he is, as the scriptures witness, *an heir of God, and a joint heir with Christ.* Rom. viii. 17.

The blessed Saviour is the believer's portion also: *God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but have everlasting life.* And again, *I will keep him, and give him for a covenant of the people.* Isa. xlii. 6. The sight of this made Paul count all things but dung that he might win Christ, Phil. iii. 8, whom he styles our life. Col. iii. 4.

The Holy Ghost also is the portion of a believer, and an earnest in his heart of all that he has in hope: *I will send you the promise of the Father.* And again: *I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.* John xiv. 16.

Thus God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are the believer's everlasting portion; and so he will find it in the end, when he comes *to be filled with all the fullness of God*; the whole of which is couched in these words: *That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one.* John xvii. 21, 22, 23. Thus much for the portion.

But a dwelling-place is likewise included in scripture, as well as the enjoyment of God; for the

the inheritance of the saints consists of a place as well as a glorious state: *I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am there ye may be also.* John xiv. 2, 3. *We, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.* 2 Peter iii. 13.

*Abimaaz.* This is an inheritance indeed! and blessed be God, it is in a measure enjoyed in this life; for when God sheds abroad his love in our hearts, upon our receiving the atonement, the Holy Ghost fills us with joy and peace in believing; and we feel union and *fellowship with the Father and the Son*, 1 John i. 3, and enjoy the communications of the Holy Ghost. And I believe this is what Paul means when he says, *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all.* Amen. 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

*Cushi.* It is Paul's meaning: and thus the blessed Trinity is experimentally and savingly known by every real believer in this world. The above inheritance is the inheritance promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob:—*I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.* And it is said that they fought a country better than that which they left, namely, *an heavenly one.* Heb. xi. 16.

*Abimaaz.* But pray, how is this inheritance secured to the heirs thereof? because some people say that an heir of it may fall from grace—be

disinherited—and have *his portion in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone*; and if so, it had been better for them that they had never been made heirs.

*Cushi.* Men who talk at that rate do not trust in the grace of God; if you read their writings, you will find that all their contention is for fleshly works, and in works they trust. And though the word *grace* be often brought in, yet it is only done as a deception to entangle others; hence such are said in scripture to *weave the spider's web*; that is, as the spider catcheth her prey in her web, so these interweave the word *grace* to catch souls for Satan in the net of works. And as many a fly settles on the web to rest till it be devoured, so many souls settle on the Arminian web of grace and works, till they are entangled in the curse of God and jaws of the devil. Such trust in themselves, not in God; and in their own dead works they place their hopes, instead of grace. But the inheritance is not promised to our works, nor secured by them: *For if the inheritance be of the law it is no more of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise.* Gal. iii. 18. If it were to be obtained by the works of the law it would be very uncertain; man might perform his part, and he might not: and if he did not perform the conditions, whatever such conditions might be, then Infinite Wisdom might be frustrated in his grand designs: therefore God has secured it in a way that the end

is sure to be accomplished; which will plainly appear, if you consider the following negative and positive: *For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect; because the law worketh wrath; for where no law is there is no transgression.* Rom. iv. 15.

If the law worketh wrath, as it certainly does, because it reveals God's wrath against sin, and stirs up sin against God; therefore the everlasting inheritance cannot be obtained by works, nor can it be secured by the revelation of wrath: so far from it, that the stiffest legalist is the greatest enemy to God, and the farthest from the kingdom of God. *The inheritance therefore is of faith [which is God's gift], that it might be [bestowed] by grace [not earned by works], to the end the promise might [not miscarry, but] be sure to all the seed.* Rom. iv. 16.

Thus you see it is a blessing given us in Christ—promised to faith—secured by grace—and insured to all the chosen seed. Those persons that you speak of, trust altogether in their own works, and bring in the word *grace* as a trap to entangle others in the works of the law: and when their fleshly works deceive and throw them down, as they did Peter, then they cry out, such an one is fallen from grace: whereas such always fight against grace. Thus the painted sepulchre wears the garland—while he is permitted to deceive, and grace bears the scandal; when God fulfils his promise, *The prating fool shall fall.* Prov. x. 8.

*Abimaaz.* But there are many of these people who talk much of legal convictions and law terrors ; and you know that Paul says, it is *experience that worketh hope.*

*Cushi.* The experience of pardon, peace, and reconciliation through Christ, and of regeneration by the Holy Ghost, worketh hope, but no other : the devils have experienced as many legal convictions, law terrors, motions of pride, workings of error, and as much desperate rebellion, as all the human race together, and yet are as far from hope as enmity and eternity can set them. But the elect are predestinated : *In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.* Eph. i. 11. Hence they are said to have their names inrolled in the book of life ; and the book is signed by three immutable witnesses ; and each witness has his name recorded in it, as appears by the Bible ; and the Bible is a copy of the eternal council. *There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one.* 1 John v. 7. This book is *sealed with seven seals,* Rev. v. 1, and delivered to the dear Redeemer, as God the Father's will ; which will was to be obeyed by the Saviour, and made known to the chosen heirs. The conditions of it, such as, magnifying the law, and satisfying divine justice, were to be punctually performed, and the Father's plan fully executed by the

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the Lord Christ; and so the inheritance was to be handed down to us by the Father's will, and the Son's testament; of which will Christ is the testator, the executor, and the mediator. *And for this cause he is the Mediator of the new testament, that by means of [his] death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were [committed] under the first testament [or law], they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance: for where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.* Heb. ix. 15, 16. Our blessed Lord shewed this when he instituted the Lord's supper; which prefigured the death of himself as the Testator, and the benefits of the testament, flowing to the innumerable multitude of chosen heirs. *For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.* Matt. xxvi. 28.

*Abimaaz.* If this be the case, pray what became of the elect that went out of the world before the death of Christ? How could the eternal inheritance be conveyed to them? For the apostle says, *that a testament is of force after men are dead; otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.* Heb. ix. 17.

*Cushi.* When the Saviour revealed the Father's will and his own testament to Adam, saying, *The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head, and the serpent shall bruise the Saviour's heel*, his death was implied in the promise, and clearly shewn by the sacrifice: and when Abel embraced the same

promise by faith, his lamb prefigured the Lord's death : hence Christ is said to die in the type ; and is therefore called *the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*. Rev. xiii. 8. So that the testament was of strength as soon as the first promise was confirmed by a sacrifice. And by those legal sacrifices *was the gospel preached to the children of Israel*, Heb. iv. 1, 2, 3 ; and those that rejected it, and trusted in the moral law, died in unbelief, and came short of the inheritance ; but those who mixed faith with the word, received the benefits of the testament ; *they eat the spiritual meat, and drank the spiritual drink ; they drank of the rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ*. 1 Cor. x. 4.

Moses was very particular in pointing the Israelites to this blessed Testator and testament ; for the tabernacle, which prefigured the church, the books likewise, and the people, were all sprinkled, to shew that the church must be washed in the blood of the antitype ; and that the testament must be confirmed by the blood of Christ, was shewn by sprinkling the books ; and that sinners hearts must be sprinkled from an evil conscience, was shewn by sprinkling the people. *For when Moses had spoken every precept to the people, according to the law (he then pointed them to the blood of Christ), he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the books and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. Moreover, he sprinkled*



*sprinkled likewise with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry.* And almost all things are by the law purged with blood : and all this to let the sinner know, that *without shedding of blood is no remission.* It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these ; (and what sacrifices could they be but the body, blood, and soul of the Son of God ?) Heb. ix. 19—23.

*Abimaaz.* I am fully satisfied with the account, and have a most comfortable view of the eternal inheritance ; and, blessed be God, I have had many sweet foretastes of it : but Satan and my own unbelieving heart have often robbed me of my peace and comfort ; and indeed at times I have been sorely tempted to believe that I had neither part or lot in the matter. I see the testament is well confirmed, and the inheritance richly secured, being witnessed by the eternal Three—ratified by the sevenfold seal of heaven—and enjoined to us, with all its saving benefits, by the blood of the Son of God. And I am fully persuaded, that, as the covenant is confirmed, *no man disannulleth or addeth thereto.* Gal. iii. 15. But I have often doubted of my right and title, and whether my evidences are real or not.

*Cushi.* The eternal inheritance is handed down to us in an unconditional promise ; and as God is called a believer's portion, so a believer is called *an heir*

*heir of God*; and as the portion is held forth to us in a promise, so a believer is called *an heir of promise*, to whom the inheritance is confirmed by oath. Heb. vi. 17. And the testament also is called *the covenant of promise*. Eph. ii. 12.

That which gives a man a right and title to it, in the first place, is the free invitation and promise of God: *Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely*. Rev. xxii. 17; there is the invitation: *and he that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out*, John vi. 37; there is the promise to the coming heir.

Secondly, That which makes manifest our sonship and heirship is the grace of faith: *For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus*. Gal. iii. 26. The appropriating act of faith is called a *receiving the promises*—and a *receiving Christ Jesus the Lord*, Col. ii. 6: both are the same: for if we receive the promises, the Lord is our portion, held forth in the promise; and when it is called a *receiving the Lord*, it is the same; *for all the promises are in him yea and amen*.

Believing on the name of Christ for life and salvation is called a *receiving of him*: *He came to his own, but his own received him not; but to as many as did receive him, to them gave he power [or privilege] to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name*. John i. 12. Thus you see, that the privilege of sonship and heirship is made  
manifest

manifest to us by faith ; and faith ventures upon a divine grant.

Faith is likewise called a substance, and an evidence : *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.* Heb. xi. 1. The things which a believer hopes for is the everlasting enjoyment of his God in heaven ; and as faith leads the mind to Christ, discovers Christ, lays hold of Christ, applies Christ, and gives Christ a dwelling in the heart by faith, Eph. iii. 17 ; it is called *the substance of things hoped for* ; and as the witness of God's Spirit always attends it, and as it impresses the mind with the strongest persuasion, and confirms and ratifies the truth of God to the believing soul, it is called *the evidence of things not seen.*

To be short ; faith is a divine persuasion, a humble confidence, a living fruit, an active grace, a discerning eye, an appropriating hand, and a moving foot. It is born of God ; it is a divine substance, not a shadow ; a living fruit of the Holy Ghost, not a barren assent ; a comfortable assurance of all promised good, and not a deceiving fancy : —The just live by it ; they overcome the world by it : the saints' conflicts are called faith's fight, and their conquests are called faith's victory.

Faith is such a powerful demonstration to the believer's conscience, that if he were under a strong temptation, and violently beset with unbelief, he dare not deliberately lay his hand on his heart,  
look

look his Maker in the face, and say he has neither part nor lot in his great salvation. Faith, *as an evidence of things not seen*, would gainsay every word of such a rash declaration, bring him in culpable of falsehood, and make him retract every word even in the court of conscience; and “who “against faith and conscience can be heard infal-  
“lible (says Milton); yet many will presume.” The Psalmist *said in his heart, All men are liars*; but *he that believes is not to make haste*, nor such hasty conclusions, Isa. xxviii. 16; for faith comes in as a deliberate evidence of the truth, and gainsays the whole of it, as may be seen in the Psalmist, *This is my infirmity*.

*Abimaaz*. But if God’s grant give me a right, and if faith secures the inheritance to me, as the scriptures that you have quoted plainly prove, for they say, *that God gave it to Abraham by promise*; and *if they that are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise of none effect*; and again, *for as many as are of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham*, this is plainly proved.—But then, why is a man said to obtain a right by doing? *Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city*. Rev. xxii. 14.

*Cushi*. Take heed that you never expound one scripture to contradict another; if you do, you will make a jargon of the sweetest harmony, charge divine rectitude with inconsistency, and the God of  
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order with confusion. *Wisdom says, My mouth shall speak truth, and wickedness is an abomination to my lips. All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing froward or perverse in them. They are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge.* Prov. viii. 7, 8, 9. Now, to shew you the meaning of the above text, first I will grant it you in your own sense, and see how the current of scripture will harmonize with your opinion. We will suppose that a man, in a state of nature, never had committed an actual transgression; though God declares that *all have sinned*; yet, for argument's sake, we will add to that man abstinence from sin—that he has observed every precept of the law externally, and lived exactly to that rule; yet God *has concluded all men in unbelief.* Rom. xi. 32. And what says God of his works—*whatsoever is not of faith is sin,* Rom, xiv. 23; and again, *without faith it is impossible to please God.* Heb. xi. 6. And what says the Judge himself of such a man—*he that believeth not shall be damned.* Mark xvi. 16. What says God of his human righteousness—*wo to them that cover with a covering, but not of my spirit, that they may add sin to sin.* Isa. xxx. 1.

The grand points of the law are two, that a man love God with all his heart, and his neighbour as himself;—*on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.* Thus you see all the law hangs on the hinge of love; but what says God of the

the natural man? why, that the *carnal mind is enmity against God; that it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.* Therefore the Holy Ghost concludes, *that if a man have all knowledge, and understand all mysteries, and speak with the tongue of men and angels; and if he give all his goods to feed the poor, and his body to be burned, and hath not charity, or love, it profiteth him nothing.* 1 Cor. chap. xiii. He is still of the works of the law, and as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse;—*for by the deeds of the law shall no flesh living be justified.* Thus you see that your legal construction upon that text runs foul of half the word of God. Is not this *darkening counsel by words without knowledge?* Job xxxviii. 2. Will not God say of you, *that ye have not spoken the thing that is right of me?* Job xlii. 8.

Now let me shew you my opinion of that text: What is God's command concerning Christ and his gospel? The text, you know, mentions doing his commandments. Why he says, *I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee [Moses], and will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will requite it of him.* Deut. xviii. 18, 19. John brings this in, *And this is his commandment; That we should believe on the name of his son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.*

*mandment.* 1 John iii. 23. Now, suppose God should *open the door of faith to a man*, Acts xiv. 27; and *fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness in him, and the work of faith with power*, 2 Thes. i. 11; inso-much that God should *purify his heart by faith*, Acts xv. 9; would not the above commands be obeyed by such a man? *he hath received grace (by Christ) for obedience to the faith*, Rom. i. 5; or, in other words, he hath been enabled to believe through grace; or, by God's gracious gift of faith, he is enabled *to believe and obey the gospel*.

*Abimaaz.* Certainly the above commands are done, or obeyed, by such a man; because, as you say, he *has received grace for obedience to the faith*; and if the grace of God doth not produce obedience to the doctrines of faith, what does? John says, *This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith*; but the world always overcomes an unbeliever, and ever will. It is faith that purifies the heart; and he that is destitute of this grace is filled with guilt, enmity, and errors, and therefore as far from doing the commandments as Satan himself.

*Cushi.* Very true. Well, you find that all the law and the prophets hang on the hinge of love; but no man by his natural power can reach this hinge, because the *carnal mind is enmity*. Now, suppose God should fulfil this promise to a man; namely, *circumcise his heart to love the Lord God with all his heart, and with all his soul, that he*

*might live, Deut. xxx. 6, and enable a man to say, as John did, we love him because he first loved us, —and such a man doth in his heart love both God and his neighbour—would not such an one do the commandments, seeing the scriptures declare, that love worketh no ill to his neighbour, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law? And what says God of the faith of that man? why, he that believes shall be saved. And what says the Holy Ghost of the love of him? why he says, he that loveth dwelleth in God, and God dwelleth in him.*

If this be the truth of the matter, does not such a man do the commandments? when God himself works in him both inclination and motion; or, to speak in the dialect of scripture, *it is God that works in him both to will and to do of his good pleasure.* Phil. ii. 13. And if it be God's work in him, what has such a man to glory in but the grace of God? *Faith is the gift of God, and the work of God; this is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.* John vi. 29. It is real faith in Jesus Christ, and pure love to God, that produces evangelical obedience: as it is written, *the grace of God teacheth men to deny ungodliness and worldly lust, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in the world.* Tit. ii. 12. Therefore we may conclude, that whosoever does not attribute his obedience to the grace of God, robs God of the glory of his own work; and he that ascribes it to free-will and human power, deifies himself.

*Abimaaz.*



*Abimaaz.* I am sweetly instructed, and abundantly satisfied, with your opinion of the text, it tallies so exactly with my own experience; nor do I believe that all the advocates for free-will and self-righteousness upon earth could erase your evangelical sentiments from my judgment. I evidently see that it is the faithful man to whom the great reward is promised; and it is audacious pride in men to attribute that glory to fleshly works which is due only to the God of grace: the humble believer is preserved, while the lofty work-monger meets with his just deserts. Well might the Psalmist say, *O love the Lord all ye his saints; for the Lord preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer.* Psalm xxxi. 23. It is clear to me that your doctrine wisely secures the glory of our salvation to God, and affords comfort and establishment to his adopted children; and, if I am not much mistaken, the glory of God, and the salvation of his elect by Jesus Christ, was the ultimate end that God had in view when he created the world; and that end he still aims at in his redeeming and reconciling sinners to himself; yea, his government of the world, as well as his works of creation and redemption, of providence and grace, was from the first the great and grand design of the Almighty; which will be accomplished when God displays *the riches of his grace in glory by Jesus Christ.* Then shall be known by the church, to the principalities

*and powers, in heavenly places, the manifold wisdom of God.* Eph. iii. 30.

*Cushi.* Now you speak like one of the true circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and place no confidence in the flesh. But in some things I think you favour so much of the old cask, that you are, like Moab, *settled on your lees.* Jer. xlviii. 11.

*Abimaaz.* Though you are not a professor of Greek or Hebrew, yet I find you are a very nice critic in the *language of Canaan.* Isa. xix. 18.

*Cushi.* I have often heard of gentlemen who have endeavoured to tear me to pieces for a breach of grammar, which is but a breach of sense and sounds at most, and can only communicate a jargon to the ear; while such have made fifty breaches in divinity in one discourse, which ministers destruction to the soul. Therefore an ungrammatical divine is ten thousand times better than a learned and eloquent deist, though he be dignified with the title of learned. The blessed Saviour never made one breach in divinity, though, according to our rules, he made one in grammar, when he said, *Before Abraham was I am.*

But to return to our subject; the glory of all good works wrought in men ought to be attributed to God, *from whom every good and every perfect gift cometh.* Hence the real church of God owns, to the honour of her head, that *the Lord had*  
wrought

*wrought all her works in her.* Isa. xxvi. 12. For my part I have narrowly observed the lives of God's elect who appear to be found in the truth, and called by grace; and by what I can gather, they are the only *workers unto the kingdom of God.* I generally find them employed like their blessed Lord; sometimes weeping and carrying the cross; at other times employed in acts of charity to the utmost of their ability; at other times at war with some sore temptation, besetting sin, or spreading error; at other times opposing the wise disputers of this world, who oppose the sovereignty of their Maker, and justify themselves; sometimes I find them at the work of self-examination; at other times citing themselves before the tribunal of God for some misdemeanor, fighting against the flesh, confessing their faults, justifying their God, imploring forgiveness, and seeking reconciliation with him, as the summit of all their happiness; sometimes I find them bemoaning the loss of their Lord, and earnestly seeking his face; at other times, with the state of some poor sinner on their minds, travailing in birth till Christ be formed in him; at other times *with the high praises of God in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand,* Psalm cxlix. 6; at other times I find them condoling the miserable, or *weeping with them that weep;* and sometimes *holding forth the word of life, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.* 1 Per. iv. 10.

In short, I never could apply the Lord's divine

salutation of *All hail*, Matt. xxviii. 9, to any but to these; for these, in the strictest sense of the word, may be called *holy workfolks*.

I have narrowly watched the various tribes of legal workers, and indeed they sometimes seem to outrun the real saint in outward appearance; but, as the Lord says, there are last that shall be first, and first last; for many are called, but few chosen. While the self-righteous remain destitute of grace, whatever outward shew they may make, God is not glorified in them; their principles are corrupt, their judgments filled with confusion; their motives are base (while destitute of the faith of God's elect, and self is the end aimed at in all their shew of devotion); they expect to bring in God a debtor to them, while, as the Lord says, all their works are to be seen of men. I have often heard them abuse the sovereignty of God, and attribute tyranny to their Maker, *whose judgment must be according to truth*; at other times calling his decrees blasphemous, though they *bring forth a saving knowledge of God's mind and will, and make the barren heart of a sinner like a fruitful field*; at other times, I find them abusing the testimony of God's servants, construing their words to a sense they never intended, and drawing conclusions that never entered their thoughts, in order to bring the grace of God into contempt; at other times, I find them so profuse with the mercy of God, as to entail it on all the human race; and at other times so sparing, as

to declare that some of the Lord's redeemed are in hell. In short, pride, arrogance, self-seeking, and self-deifying, is all that ever I could see in the self-righteous free-willer;—confounding the sense of God's word, and rebellion against his sovereign will, has ever discovered itself in all that I have had a knowledge of; and such proceedings appear to me to be no better than an introduction to the performances exhibited in hell.

O sinner, lay by pleading thy own merit, for God will surely *reject thy confidences* to the end of the chapter: *Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity.* Matt. vii. 22, 23. Thus you see that hell itself will not cure the legalist of boasting; nor will the encomiums of the Judge himself ever set the elect at it; they will stick to their being unprofitable servants to the last, as has been already observed; and it must be so, for the Lord declares that *he that humbleth himself shall be exalted, and he that exalteth himself shall be abased.*

*Abimaaz.* I see clearly that faith is a soul-humbling, self-emptying, and self-abasing grace, as well as an evidence of things not seen; but I am at times led to doubt whether I have any faith at all.

*Cushi.* Didst thou never discover in the word of God, as well as in the first open vision that thou

hadst, an amiableness and a suitableness in the Saviour, as he is set forth in the word, inasmuch that thy very soul went out after him?—that was faith's eye that discovered the object of life. *He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but he shall have the light of life.* John viii. 12. And hast thou not found thy heart so bent for a part and lot in him, that all the world hath appeared as nothing when compared to him?—that is faith's power, inclining the will to chuse and embrace him above all other objects. *He that comes to God must believe that he is a rewarder ; and again, Faith lays hold on eternal life.* Thus faith shines on the understanding, and discovers the Saviour as the object most desirable, and then inclines the will to chuse him ; and then, lastly, she calls in love to admire her choice ; this is the grace that availeth—*neither circumcision availeth any thing nor uncircumcision, but faith that worketh by love.* Gal. v. 6. And as soon as love comes into the soul, she casts out slavish fear, and brings in her own attendants, which are joy and peace—*God fill you with joy and peace in believing.* Rom. xv. 13. The believer now cannot express his sensations—*whom having not seen he loves ; and though now he sees him not, yet, believing, he rejoices with joy unspeakable and full of glory.* 1 Pet. i. 8.

*Abimaaz.* What you have said of faith my soul has often experienced and sweetly enjoyed ; therefore I hope I am really blessed with that spiritual grace ;

grace ; and I do find that it purifies my heart—for answers of pardon and peace are often brought to me from the Saviour by faith's prayer.

*Cushi.* Then thou art upon the foundation, and may say with the apostle, *this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask he heareth us, and we have the thing desired.* 1 John v. 14. Thy faith is genuine—a real evidence of things not seen. Poverty of spirit is a sure mark of those that shall *obtain the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.* Phil. iii. 14. When a man sees the insufficiency of his own righteousness, he accepts an imputed one ; when he feels his lost estate, he is thankful for a Saviour ; when he is conscious of the infinite debt that he has contracted, he flees to the surety ; and when sensible of the deceitfulness of his own heart, that he dares place no confidence in the flesh, he embraces the rock for want of a shelter ; and when his refuges of lies are all swept away, and his false hopes rooted up, then he digs deep, and finds all on the Rock of Ages. This is the man that is poor in spirit :—Stripped of pride, and humble in heart, like the poor Prodigal, he comes to God, with humble confession, knocks at mercy's door, and begs the bread of heaven ; such an one is sure of the prize—*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* Matt. v. 3.

Thirdly, the Holy Ghost is sent into the believer's heart, to influence, enlighten, and instruct his understanding and conscience, and to bear a

joint witness with conscience that the believer is justified by his faith;—where there used to be nothing but the sentence of self-condemnation, and the tormenting accusation of an evil conscience. Things are so changed, that the believer finds the accusation is silenced, and a joint testimony for God is evidently felt and enjoyed;—*he that believeth hath the witness in himself, for the spirit beareth witness.* 1 John v. 6. 10. These things enable souls to say, *Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience; as I said before, the believer hath a joint witness; for the Spirit beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God.* Rom. viii. 16. Thus you see that love, joy, peace, and faith, are the *first-fruits of the Spirit.* Rom. viii. 23; and the spirit of these fruits is the foretaste and the *earnest of our [future] inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.* Eph. i. 14.

*Abimaaz.* I clearly see that my soul is interested in the covenant of grace; nor am I without the evidence, the first-fruits, and the earnest that you have mentioned; and I believe, according to my present frame and views, that I shall never doubt again; *thou, Lord, of thy goodness, hast made my bill so strong.* I suppose that Prodigalis enjoyed these *heavenly blessings in Christ Jesus*, these sweet foretastes of heaven, in a wonderful degree; for it is often seen, that a miserable Prodigal meets with a conspicuous deliverance, and a soul-humbling reception,



reception, when God *gives him repentance unto life*. And indeed if such poor souls had not, it would be impossible for them to believe to their eternal salvation; they having such a dreadful sight of an angry God, and their sinful selves, it requires a work of faith with power, to put their unbelief to the blush, and the devil and conscience to silence; nothing will confound these but a wonderful ray, an almighty deliverance, and a divine and all-prevailing evidence.

*Cusbi*. That is another excellent speech; you begin to mend upon it, I think. But to your inquiry. Prodigalis did, I believe, enjoy as much of the foretastes of heaven as most do, until the Spirit of grace had armed him with the whole armour of God, and then he led him forth as an armed *soldier of Jesus Christ, to be tempted of the devil*.

*Abimaaz*. It is amazing to me that the devil should be so unwearied in tempting the children of God, seeing he has met with nothing but repeated disappointments; besides, the Saviour has promised power to his children, sufficient to vanquish *all the power of the devil; insomuch that nothing shall by any means hurt them*. Luke x. 19. The devil must know this, because he never could destroy one of God's elect; and, as *the gates of hell shall not prevail*, Matt. xvi. 18, I am surprised that Satan does not raise the siege as an assailant, and get weary of the suit as a plaintiff.

*Cusbi*. There is no likelihood of that; Satan still  
ploughs

ploughs in hope; and though he cannot destroy the elect, yet if he can destroy their peace, or get them to rebel against God, it is pleasing to him: the devil has a feast when we have a fast. And, on the other hand, when we are on the mount the devil has a double hell: besides, his enmity against Christ and his elect is so deeply rooted, that he cannot endure the sovereignty of the Saviour, nor the objects of his choice.

*Abimaaz.* But why is the devil so incensed against the Saviour, any more than against God the Father.

*Cuski.* Several reasons may be assigned for it; First, The Lord Christ left the rebel-angels in their rebellion, when he *charged them with folly.* Job iv. 18. Secondly, He cursed and condemned their prime leader in Eden. Gen. iii. 14. Thirdly, He *reserved them in everlasting chains* [debarred of light] *under darkness to the final judgment,* Jude 6; while, on the other hand, he confirmed the elect angels by an irrevocable decree, took them from the basis of free-will, and fixed them in immutable love and almighty power; so as to render it impossible for them ever to fall, as the other had done. They are not left now to the freedom of their own will, but confirmed in their glorious Head, Christ; who is therefore called, *the Head of all principality and power.* Col. ii. 10. And as the angels are confirmed by the Saviour in eternal friendship, their willingness to renounce their former standing  
in

in the freedom of their own will; their ready acquiescence in, and thankful acceptance of confirmation in Christ the elect Head, in whom God had predestinated their everlasting standing; for this reason they are called elect angels: and their acquiescence is called a reconciliation, though they were never at enmity. *And having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things to himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven.* Col. i. 20.

This is one cause of the devil's enmity against election; and he has got thousands in the world who make a profession of religion that are influenced by him, and boldly espouse and defend his cause against the sovereign will of the Almighty. The great and terrible day of the Lord will discover many wonderful and awful scenes of this sort, to the everlasting confusion of many who now triumph in it.

Secondly, It is a most galling and degrading consideration to a proud and lofty spirit, as the devil is, that fallen men, after they were seduced by Satan, were found under the condemnation and curse of God, as well as themselves; and when both natures appeared before God equally condemned and on a level; that the Saviour should reject the angelic nature, and assume the human—*for verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham.* Heb. ii. 16.

This

This sovereign act, this discriminating grace of the Saviour, the devil hates.

Thirdly, By the Saviour's death on the cross the devil suffered loss in his kingdom ; his dark dominions were wonderfully discovered ; the destroying power of sin (the main pillar of his empire) was taken away, insomuch that it shall never destroy one of God's elect. The devil was cast down as an accuser, and cannot in one sense be called the god of this world, for the heir of all things overcame him.

Death, another inferior sovereign in Satan's dominions, was plagued, and shall surely be destroyed. Hosea xiii. 14. Satan, sin, and death were triumphed over, and exposed openly on the cross, Col. ii. 15, the devil led captive by the Saviour, Eph. iv. 8, and a kingdom of grace set up in the world, that shall surely demolish his. Dan. vii. 14.

Another reason that may be assigned of the devil's malice is, that the Saviour, whom he so hates, will bring him and all his legions forth to judgment ; Satan is reserved under darkness to judgment ; and, when the Lord will expose or *reveal the whole mystery of iniquity*, 2 Theff. ii. 7, 8, then shall the saints appear in the truth which the devil left, as Esther did, in Vashti's palace, Esther ii. 17 ; for they *shall be as the angels of God in heaven*, Matt. xxii. 30 ; while fallen angels shall be left on a level with fallen men ; not at all superior, unless

unless it be in misery: hence you read of sinners going in company with *the devil and his angels*. Matt. xxv. 41. But the most tormenting thought to infernal pride is, that elected, redeemed, and restored men shall judge these infernal kings, princes, and potentates: *Know ye not that we shall judge angels?* 1 Cor. vi. 3. In that day it will appear, that those that 'died in free-will and self-righteousness will be found among the black brigade, as sure as there is a God that judgeth right.

These are some of the reasons that may be assigned for the devil's unlimited malice against the Saviour and his elect; therefore it is vain for the elect to expect reconciliation, seeing God has declared the war: and we may say of Satan's envy as the learned Milton does:

“ Never can true reconcilment grow

“ Where deadly hate has pierc'd so deep.”

Hence we may warrantably conclude, that the devil will never raise the siege while God has a church in the world; nor will he ever drop the suit, as a plaintiff, as long as he can draw one believer to listen to his lies, yield to his temptations, or fret at his accusations.

*Abimeaz.* Pray how did he begin with Prodigals? I suppose in a furious way, because he had formerly been a faithful servant to the devil; and as he knew many of his wiles, he was the better able to expose them: it is often seen that such are  
the

the most valiant for truth, the most loyal to the Saviour, and the most fervent in prayer. They that are *faithful to the unrighteous mammon will be so to the true riches*. Luke xvi. 11. *They that have much forgiven will love much*, Luke vii. 47 ; *and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more*. Luke xii. 48.

*Cushi*. You must know, that Prodigalis, being so conspicuously delivered, thought the devil was so rebuked as never to attack him again ; nor did he in the least suspect that the evils of his heart would ever make a second appearance ; nor that he should ever lose sight of the Saviour. In this secure frame he was altogether unprepared for trial ; the devil knew this, and therefore caught the opportunity. A believer may often be charged with being off his guard ; but no such charge can justly be brought against the devil ; in this point *he is wiser than the children of light*.

When the devil came to him he first poured a whole shower of fiery darts into his mind ; the corruption of his heart caught the flame, *and the whole course of nature was set on fire of hell*. James iii. 6. The smoke beclouded his understanding ; or (as Paul says), *the god of this world had blinded his eyes* ; his judgment was confused, and every divine sensation seemed to be swallowed up with horror and dismay. Satan having thus gained an advantage of him, he presented him afresh to the bar of judicature, and there accused him of the very blasphemous

phemous thoughts which himself injected into his mind ; he tempted him to believe that he had fallen from grace ; he suggested hard thoughts of the Saviour to him, and then accused him of it. He suggested to him that he had sinned against the Holy Ghost ; and that all the confusion and horror that Prodigalis felt were the effects of the just judgment of God for his unpardonable sin ; and was no less than an earnest of what he would suffer to eternity.

Prodigalis felt for his soul-comforting witness, but he could not feel him ; his faith seemed not to do her usual office : therefore the poor soul sunk into the real fears of death, and horrors of hell, as bad as ever. Destruction appeared on one side, and Satan on the other ; and the devil brought many of Moses's old accusations against him, as if it were Moses that was accusing him as an unbeliever.

Poor Prodigalis never was more confounded than now : at his first trial he had no sensible hope of mercy ; but to be arraigned, after justification, was a mystery too profound for him to make a judgment of. Therefore he gave all over for lost ; not doubting but he was given up as a reprobate into the hands of Satan ; and that he would certainly prevail to make him vent the horror and rebellion of his burdened heart in blasphemous expressions.

While Prodigalis was sinking in despondency,  
these

these words came with a divine power to his mind; *Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are made partakers of Christ's sufferings.* 1 Pet. iv. 12, 13. These words gained the attention of the poor man, which Satan could not endure; for he can do nothing with us any longer than while he employs our mind, and we are attentive to his lies; which is his wisdom and our folly.

The devil, perceiving that poor Prodigalis was attentive to another voice, laid violently against him; but the other having received a little encouragement from the above text, was persuaded that he should enjoy the sentence of justification again; nay, he was persuaded that it would come with power a second time; and therefore he put up these petitions; *Hear the right, O Lord! attend unto my cry; give ear unto my prayer, that goeth not out of feigned lips: let my sentence come forth from thy presence: let thine eyes behold the things that are equal. Thou hast proved mine heart; thou hast visited me in the night; thou hast tried me.* Psalm xvii. 1, 2, 3.

As soon as Prodigalis had ended his petitions, the glorious Advocate answered his prayer in the joy of his heart; and applied these words with such power, that the sham court grew too hot for the cunning accuser; *No weapon formed against thee shall prosper, and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn.* Isa. xlv. 17.—

Poor



Poor Prodigalis recovering his spiritual might, and seeing his beclouded evidences appear, if possible, ten times brighter than ever, and finding the word of God flow in upon his mind, he laid hold of the sword of the Spirit, and said to his accuser, *It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died.* Rom. viii. 33. The devil immediately vanished.

This sham trial served to teach Prodigalis the use of God's sword; and evidently fulfilled the scriptures: *Submit yourselves therefore to God; resist the devil, and he will flee from you.* James iv. 7.

*Abimaaz.* I dare say the poor man found his love warmer—his faith stronger—and saw the office, use, and faithfulness of his Advocate in a clearer light than ever he had done before. There are none that know, but those who experience it, how the immutable love of God, and the faithfulness of the Saviour, (which appears in so many repeated deliverances), does endear the Almighty to the poor helpless believer, who is perpetually buffeted by the common enemy of God and man.

*Cushi.* Indeed, Prodigalis never had seen the Saviour in his office as an Advocate but once before, and in this confusion he had lost sight of him: but by means of trials we are led to feel our need of the Saviour in every character that he sustains, which we know nothing of until various trials make us sensible of our need of them, and

the Saviour condescends to appear in and fulfil them.

And I doubt the want of observing and considering these things is one reason of the dejection of too many precious souls in our days. Our kind Intercessor ought to be viewed in that office every time we pray. As our Mediator he is wanted when there appears a controversy between God and conscience. An Advocate and a Wonderful Counsellor must be felt for in temptations, or else the accuser's wisdom will be too much for us. And these characters our Lord sustains; and he will ever discharge his offices with divine rectitude, if the prayer of faith implores his aid.

Prodigalis was so confirmed in the faithfulness of his Lord, and in the power of faith, that he secretly wished the same trial to come over again, that he might shew his loyalty, his love, and his faithfulness to his Lord, and not dishonour him by his unbelief, as he had done, in giving place to the devil; which he saw was a sin reflecting dishonour on every perfection of his Lord.

*Abimaaz.* He had better have left his resolutions out of the conflict; for if Satan were to be let loose upon him an hundred times, if the spirit of faith ceased to operate, he would feel the workings of unbelief more or less. I have been vain enough ere now, when I have found my heart fixed, and my consolations powerful, to defy a temptation; thinking

thinking that my mountain stood so strong that I should never be moved. But, alas ! what are the best of men against Satan's rage, if not panoplied and fortified by the great Jehovah ? It was not without cause that Paul bid Timothy *be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus* : which strength consists in a firm persuasion of the immutable love, promised aid, and momentary support of the Almighty God and Saviour Christ Jesus.

*Cushi.* It is true what you say : but as Satan desires to have us, that he may sift us as wheat, for his own gratification, so the Lord does sometimes enable his children to triumph over him in turn. *Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy ! when I fall I shall arise : when I sit in darkness the Lord shall be a light unto me.* Micah vii. 8. I do not say that the above text is a direct answer to the devil himself ; but as he is the chief agent of all the enmity that is displayed against the children of God, it is, in the strictest sense, applicable to him ; agreeable to the Saviour's method, when Satan tempted Peter to stand in the Lord's way, the Lord rebuked the agent of the action, *Get thee behind me, Satan.* When the Jews persecuted and blasphemed him, he said, *You are of your father the devil, and the lust of your father ye will do.* When his enemies came to take him, he said, *This is your hour and the powers of darkness.* And when Judas had yielded the bent of his mind to gender with the devil's influence, the Lord withdrew his own restraining power,

opened his heart with a sop, that Judas might perpetrate the murder that his wicked and mercenary heart had conceived: *And when he had received the sop, Satan entered into him*: and immediately after the conception was brought forth, in his betraying the innocent Son of God.

*Abimaaz.* You are right in levelling your arrow at the devil; for I believe there is no wickedness practised by mortals, but he is chief agent in the scheme, and a joint executor of it. But I suppose that Satan did not attempt to bring poor Prodigalis a second time to his sham court of judicature; did he?

*Cush.* Indeed Satan brought him to his sham court of judicature more than once, twice, or thrice; but not the next time; if he had, Prodigalis had been in a measure prepared for him. But the devil finds that we have various discipline to pass through, therefore he varies his snares also: for should he constantly waylay us in one continued path, the bird would soon get as cunning as the fowler: for, as the wise man says, *Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird.* Prov. i. 17. No, no; Satan (in this sense) is no fool; though (in another sense) he is the greatest of fools; because he is the first transgressor; supreme in mischief, and supreme in misery; the farthest from God, and consequently the farthest from true wisdom.

*Abimaaz.* Pray, how did he entangle Prodigalis the third time? I long to hear; because some  
part

part of your relation so well agrees with my own experience ; and that is refreshing and establishing to me. For my part, I am for what I can get ; and you know that Paul tells us to covet earnestly the best gifts.

*Cushi.* Indeed you have spoken the truth : you are in reality for what you can get ; and one of the best sucklings that ever I took to nourish ; and would to God that I was as good a wet nurse as Paul was in his days, when he said, *But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children.* 1 Thess. ii. 7.

The way that Satan made his next attempt on Prodigalis was as follows : The poor man expected, that if ever Satan made another attempt, it would be in the old way, in which he thought he should be able to meet him : this made him too secure. Therefore Satan laid by his violent assaults, and his cloven foot, and endeavoured to come in imitation of the workings of grace ; or, as the apostle says, *He transformed himself into an angel of light :* and catching Prodigalis off his watch-tower, and too secure, he insensibly led him to the court of equity ; where he endeavoured to enthrone human reason, as the only competent judge of right and wrong. This scheme took with Prodigalis : he had not the least suspicion of the devil being in all this ; therefore, instead of resisting him, he gave him all possible attention, and was determined to hear him out. Satan having gained his ear and attention,

proceeded to start every puzzling difficulty, and  
 seeming contradiction, in form following: The  
 plaintiff sheweth, First, That there are many mys-  
 teries in the Bible dark and obscure, and the best  
 and wisest of men differ in judgment respecting  
 them. Secondly, That the mystery of the Trinity  
 is incomprehensible; and that thousands of the  
 wise and learned people deny that. Thirdly, That  
 the path to heaven by regeneration is a path that  
 excludes thousands of souls from salvation; and is  
 a road that is to the last degree perilous. Fourthly,  
 That the greatest part that are venturing on that  
 hazardous journey are poor illiterate and despicable  
 people. Fifthly, That those who are the leaders  
 of such bigoted people, are, in the general, people  
 lightly esteemed, much despised, yea, and stoutly  
 withstood, by the great, wise, and learned of the  
 world. Sixthly, That the doctrine of election  
 leaves wife, family, friends, yea, and perhaps all  
 that are near or dear in the ties of affinity or blood,  
 out of the number saved. Seventhly, the plaintiff  
 sheweth, That the best of friends and of benefac-  
 tors, as well as the majority of the whole world,  
 are averse to it, and incensed against it. Eighthly,  
 That the Most High might have prevented the  
 fall of men and devils if he would. Ninthly, That  
 all domestic comforts in wife, family, food, and  
 pleasure, must be forgone, if divine impressions  
 were lasting, conscience kept tender, or the daily  
 cross continued. Tenthly, That fasting, prayer,  
 self-denial, and hourly abstinence, must be rigidly  
 pursued,

pursued, or else all would fall to ruins at last, and hell would be the hotter for such a barren profession. Eleventhly, That Cain, Judas, Esau, and Sapphira, had fell after all their profession; and were worse than those that never made any: for where little was given little would be required; and therefore the more ignorant the more safe. Twelfthly, That the path to heaven was strait and narrow, and people that would be singular in religion were exposed to all the shafts of men and devils; and that Christ was an austere and rigid master: that there would be nothing but cross upon cross, as we see in Job; and stripe upon stripe, as in Ephraim, even to the end of the journey. Thirteenthly, That the conjugal enjoyment of a wife, an affectionate indulgence of a child, a jocular word, an innocent smile, or even a genteel suit of apparel, would be an iniquity to be punished by the judge; the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is so jealous a God.

The plaintiff further shewed, That the Bible was a doubtful revelation; many obscure phrases, and seeming contradictions, appeared palpable in it; and that many of the learned and wise had examined it, arraigned it, and condemned it; and had set up their own unbiassed and unerring reason as the only lord paramount deemed capable of censuring and determining every matter in debate relative to heaven, earth, or hell.

The plaintiff further shewed, That the continual

cross that generally attended those of this singular way of religion was, that there would be an heart to love, and an eye to pity the poor, which would be crossed with a beggar's pocket; there would be an uncommon bigoted spirit to the singular party in religion, and a great anxiety to make proselytes, which would be crossed with a heavy persecution. Spending time in this service, and neglecting other business, had, and would again, bring many to suffer hunger, cold, and nakedness. Besides, people of this strange way make the path to heaven much more difficult than it really is; they are righteous overmuch, and ready to destroy themselves at it; they talk of being partakers of the divine nature, and keep pressing after such a degree of holiness by the Spirit, as they call it, that their sin is not unlike Adam's, who wanted to be like God.

And lastly, the plaintiff added, That the things which he had mentioned were consonant, and not repugnant to some of the plain parts of what is called scripture; where God (if he be the author of the book) says, *Let us reason together.* Isa. i. 18.

*Abimaaz.* Why, the devil is an excellent pleader.

*Cushi.* In one sense he is; but not in another: he can plead against us; but he is too proud to plead guilty before God, too vile to plead innocent; and without a foundation to plead for mercy. The devil brought all these things to Prodigalis, in order to prejudice his mind against the truth of God, that he might raise rebellion in his heart.

Nor



Nor was Satan's attempt without effect; for Prodigalis did not expect a temptation with so mild a bait: he expected that every appearance of Satan would be in a storm; and therefore he listened to him; carnal reason approved of the suggestions; flesh and blood also gave into it; and, by the assistance of unbelief, Satan carried all before him.

Now was Prodigalis filled with carnal reasonings about the sovereign grace of his Maker; the perilous path to heaven; and the few, the very few, that seemed to be travelling on that singular way. He soon found the government of the world, and the salvation of all the human race, to lay with an intolerable weight upon his shoulders; and he was impiously led to infringe upon the prerogative of his Lord, whose undoubted *right it is to do as he will with his own*, Matt. xx. 15, without giving an account of any of his matters. Job xxxiii. 13.

*Abimaaz.* There is one thing in Satan's plea that I am amazed at; and that is, that those who were singular in their religion were exposed to all the shafts of men and devils: can Satan speak against himself?

*Cusbi.* Satan is not divided against himself in the management of his kingdom; if he was, how could his kingdom stand? But he can speak against himself, deny himself, and rebuke himself, when these things will serve his turn. He speaks against himself in every false prophet that rebukes sin; he denies himself in every deist that denies the being

or

or existence of fallen angels ; and he rebuked himself, when some of his own children (in mockery of Paul) were commanding of an evil spirit to leave the heart of a sinner ; whose answer was, *Paul I know, but who are you ?* and then *overcame them, and sent them out of the house wounded and naked.* Acts xix. 16.

Poor Prodigalis began to be timorous about the difficult way to the kingdom ; he yielded to the carnal fear of man, and trembled at persecution ; flesh and blood was consulted about the doctrine of particular redemption ; and carnal reason bore violently against the doctrines of election and predestination ; which influenced Prodigalis with a spirit of murmuring and rebellion against the discriminating grace of his God ; but he soon found, like Paul, that it was *hard work to kick against the pricks* : he found his mind began to be confused ; fear and horror laid a fresh hold of his conscience ; no peace of mind was enjoyed ; his mouth at a throne of grace was stopped ; a sense of the divine favour was sensibly suspended ; and shame and confusion covered his face. And as the state of his own soul began to be perilous, he was obliged to employ the powers of his mind nearer home, and leave the salvation and management of the world to God ; whose infinite wisdom needs no counsel of ours, nor will his supreme power, and absolute prerogative, ever be yielded or given up to us.

*Abimaaz.* How subtle an adversary is Satan !  
who

who would have thought that such an one as Prodigalis, a man so wonderfully delivered, and who had experienced such superabounding grace, could be so easily led from an humble submission to the will of God, even to rebel in his heart against him, and against those very truths that had made him free; but, alas! what is man if left to himself? Pray, how was he delivered out of that snare?

*Cushi.* As he was one day reasoning and disputing in his heart against the doctrines of election and particular redemption, and impiously censuring the sovereignty of his Maker, these words came to his mind with power, and full fraught with divine reproof: *Produce your cause, said the Lord, bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob. Isa. xli. 21.* This made Prodigalis tremble; he thought within himself, that if he justified all the world it would be of no force against the judgment of God; and if he held the whole system of natural religion, that would afford him no salvation below the grave; for if God was his enemy, who could be his friend in eternity? He went at last with an humble confession of his folly to his Lord, and intreated him to undertake for him, and extricate him out of this puzzling, this soul-distressing labyrinth of confusion; and the blessed Saviour was intreated of him, and gave him a wonderful deliverance; he sent such light and comfort into his soul as he thought he never had experienced before; the darkness and confusion of his troubled heart, and his carnal reasonings

reasonings against the sovereign will of his Lord, vanished, and his love and zeal burned stronger for truth than ever.

*Abimaaz.* I evidently see that there is no growth in grace nor in knowledge without crosses and trials; for, as Hezekiah saith, *By these things men live, and in all these things is the life of our spirits.* A child of God often gains ground by such stumblings, and gets fresh discoveries out of confusion; for God *discovereth deep things out of darkness, and bringeth out to light the shadow of death.*

*Cusbi.* Very true; and this was the case with Prodigalis; he had been for some time in the business of an Attorney, and had learnt many curious quibbles of law, and had formerly entertained no small opinion of his nervous logic. Satan knew this, therefore he swelled his pride of that talent, exalted his former applauded reason to the decisive chair, and then shewed the inconsistency of his new religion with his former rules of logic. Prodigalis, having lost a sense of his comfort, and the sight of his Advocate, displayed his former talent; but as reason was too stiff to submit to a superior power, pride called in rebellion; flesh and blood was conferred with concerning the mysteries of heaven; and the more reason laboured, the more she was confounded; unbelief, getting the upper hand, gave the lie to all that was divine; and thus, between a confounding devil, and confounded reason, the trial ended in  
wind

wind and confusion, and Prodigalis, with all his natural abilities, was found in the balance of the sanctuary to be lighter than vanity.

*Abimaaz.* Nevertheless I dare say this trial turned out to a good account to poor Prodigalis, for it must teach him the insufficiency of natural reason to determine divine matters, and must undoubtedly convince him of the need of God's promised Spirit to guide him into all truth.

*Cusbi.* Yes, my brother, Prodigalis lost nothing but dross in this fiery trial; he was effectually convinced that the Spirit of God was the only all-sufficient arbitrator in divine causes, and that reason must submit even to faith, instead of dictating to God. This was displayed to him in his after-contemplations on the faith of Abraham, whose obedience is set forth as our example, after whose footsteps we are to copy, and who is called the father of us all. Hence we are commanded *to look to Abraham our father, and to Sarah that bare us*, Isa. li. 2; and to tread in the *steps of our father Abraham*, Rom. iv. 12, *who is the father of us all*. ver. 16. Prodigalis considered first the call of Abraham, and the obedience of his faith; in which act he found that carnal reason was wholly excluded. *By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed and went out, not knowing whither he went.* Heb. xi. 8. By faith he obeyed, and went; while Abraham and his reason were kept entirely out of the secret

—for he obeyed, and went out, not knowing whither he went; which reason would call a wild-goose chase. Abraham received a promise of the land of Canaan, and *that he should be heir of the world*, Rom. iv. 13, and yet *God gave him none inheritance in it, no not so much as to set a foot on*. Acts vii. 5. Abraham had a good estate behind him in Ur, and had left that to wander in a strange land, where he had all in hope, but nothing in hand. If reason had been consulted in this matter, her determination would have been this, *One bird in the hand is worth two in the bush*; and therefore, like Balaam, she would be for *getting herself back again*. Numbers xxii. 34.

When God made Abraham a great prince, and his lady a princess, reason would have expected the palace of Salem; but, instead of that, the king of that city *blesse him as the less, for without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better*, Heb. vii. 7,—gives him refreshment—takes tithes of him as his sovereign and high-priest, but gives him no invitation to the city, much less to the palace. All these riddles Abraham's faith had to explain; which would have remained as obscure to human reason as Samson's riddle did to the Philistines. If we plough not with Christ's heifer we shall never find out his riddles. Abraham's leaving his own country was to teach him that this world was not his home;—his travelling in pilgrimage was explained by faith, that this was not his rest, because it is polluted,

luted, as the land of Canaan was with filthy inhabitants ;—his promise of the land of Canaan, and of the world, faith construes to mean an heavenly country, Heb. xi. 16, and a new world to come ; Abraham's not inheriting Salem, after he had received the promise of the whole land, and was made a prince in it, faith led him to understand that he must seek Jerusalem that is above, *as that city that hath foundations, whose maker and builder is God.* Heb. xi. 10.

These things Abraham had in view, and his faith brought them to live in his soul ;—an earnest and a foretaste existed in Abraham's heart by faith, and thus his *faith was the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.* The way that these things were to be obtained was shewn to Abraham in the offering up of his son (as typical of Christ), which reason would have called murder instead of obedience. Abraham communed with his God in the promises that he had revealed to him, and enjoyed much sweetness in the blessings contained in them ; and by his faith he lived in a state of perfect reconciliation and friendship with his God, and endured his pilgrimage like Moses—as seeing him who is invisible ; which, to reason, is no better than a plain contradiction, and is called enthusiasm to this day.

As Abraham lived, so he died ; faith attended his last moments, and, like a divine and constant friend, lent her supporting aid in the moment of dissolution,

dissolution; and handed the redeemed soul to the centre of all happiness—he died in faith, and received the end of his faith, the salvation of his soul. His shield is now his everlasting portion, he enjoys Canaan in the best sense, and Salem is his royal city in every sense; and he, like Melchisedec of old, is no less than a king and a priest in it.

*Abimaaz.* These contemplations must be very sweet to Prodigalis, as well as teach him to keep reason in her proper place; that, in matters of divinity, wisdom may be asked of him that giveth liberally and upbraideth not; besides, he must see the necessity of being kept by the mighty power of God, when he saw the various stratagems of Satan, and the advantages that he had hitherto gained over him.

*Cusbi.* It is a wretched fault in Christians to neglect prayer in these times of trouble; they often fall to reasoning, disputing, and contriving, instead of supplicating; this is their loss, and the devil's gain. This is evident in Jonah, when God commanded him to denounce his judgments on Nineveh.—He begins to reason on the goodness of God, and of his slowness to anger, and then concludes, that, if God repented of the evil, his reputation would fall to the ground; he then began to contrive which way to save his reputation, and Satan told him by a flight to Joppa. Jonah tells you, that *they that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy.* Jonah ii. 8. You hear nothing of  
Jonah's



Jonah's prayer till he got into the fish's belly; so far from it, that neither the importunity nor the example of the heathen mariners could draw one petition from Jonah. The sailors called every man upon his God, and desired Jonah to try his interest with his; but he would rather sink than supplicate—so stubborn is the sinner when carried away with a lying vanity, in defence of his own supposed merit, worth, or reputation. However Prodigalis found Satan too subtle an attorney for him, and therefore he was glad to become a pauper upon the crown of heaven, where his inheritance lay, and where it was well secured by his Saviour (under whose direction only he could gain the suit), who is by profession an Advocate, and by nature and repute wonderful in counsel and excellent in working.

*Abimaaz.* I greatly admire the instructions that Prodigalis got by his last trial; for I am fully persuaded that he that denies the sufficiency of his own reason in divine matters, shall ever appear the most reasonable man; while, on the other hand, those that exalt it against divine revelation, appear of all flesh the most unreasonable. Divinity is the great beautifier and ornament of nature; and to deify human nature, in contempt of divinity, is to leave her exposed to infinite and everlasting contempt and deformity; for it is thought by some, that an enemy to God will not appear at the general doom in a human shape, sin will deform them, and make them not unlike evil angels; and, if so, it is not

without a meaning that the wicked are called serpents, which is Satan's name, and was once the shape that he assumed ; nor is it without a meaning that the saints shall appear as the angels of God in heaven. Pray how did Prodigalis go on after this happy deliverance ; did the old Attorney attack him again ?

*Cushi.* There is no fear of that ; Satan will never give up tempting long together. Prodigalis found it as his blessed Lord and master did in his days—*And when the devil had ended all his temptations he departed from him for a season*, Luke iv. 13, that he might come again at another seasonable opportunity. Prodigalis walked some time very comfortably, and enjoyed much sweetness in his soul, from the rich mercy of his Lord ; who not only brought him to repentance at first, but still delivered him out of his troubles and difficulties, and kindly sealed the pardon of his manifold infirmities home upon his conscience. This comfortable gale continued some few weeks with Prodigalis, and he expected it would continue to the end of his voyage ; but, instead of that, it began gradually to abate as before, which he was much grieved at. The Bible, that had afforded him such sweet discoveries and comfort, seemed to conceal its wonders ; the light shined not on it as usual ; therefore David's petition, *shew me wonders in thy law*, was very seasonable to him. He found himself much straitened in prayer also—he had not  
that

that freedom of access with confidence as formerly, and therefore little delighted in it. These things are very trying to a poor soul that has been brought into tender favour, and indulged with sweet communion with the Lord; the poor soul is *like a child that is weaned from his mother, yea such a soul is like a weaned child.* Psalm cxxxiii. 2.

*Abimaaz.* I know what that is—my soul has had a sad experience of that; to be debarred the heavenly freedom—to find divine comfort suspended—to go mourning under the sensible frowns of the best of fathers, is one of the sorest afflictions that a newborn soul can labour under.

*Cushi.* It really is; but Prodigalis did not stay here; for he found the word of God preached had no effect upon him; it neither gave him reproof nor comfort; he appeared in one of the worst of frames—cold—stupid—and insensible; and in this state he continued many days, until reading the Bible became a burden, and prayer a task; he went about his devotions like a galled horse to the collar, or an unaccustomed bullock to the yoke; his service was mercenary, and performed with reluctance, and so he continued until his soul was shut up in legal bondage. What to make of this trial he knew not;—it was a frame that he had never experienced before. In process of time he began to give way to a peevish fretful temper, which his conscience often smote him for, as it cast a gloomy shade upon the glorious religion of Jesus Christ;

besides, he had made a great stir in religious matters, which had brought the eyes of many upon him; some watched for his halting, and some for his persevering; those that watched for his halting, could make his anger appear by cruel mockings; while those that loved him were grieved, for they saw that his soul was not healthy, because *his countenance was not comely*. When peace reigns in the conscience, *God is the health of the countenance*. Psalm xlii. 11.

This dark, cold, and lifeless frame, brought on a fit of unbelief, to which he so much yielded as at times to give up prayer, which was adding sin to sin; and when some of his associates came to him for spiritual conversation and instruction, he withdrew, and, like Jeremiah, determined to  *speak no more in the name of the Lord*. Jer. xx. 9. This was doubling his transgression; and at last he neglected the sanctuary service, and began to draw wretched conclusions concerning his state, and even gave way to doubts and fears, and consequently to murmuring and complaining.—Now was the time for Satan to work again; accordingly he entered another action against him, and brought him to the court of common pleas, and there he attempted to appeal even to the divine oracles. The plaintiff shewed that a child of God could not sin—*he that is born of God sinneth not*, 1 John v. 18; but that Prodigalis was not one of them, for he sinned in heart, in thought, and in word, and was guilty of the sins of omission  
and

and commission, yea, of the sin of rebellion also, both in heart and in lip.

Then the plaintiff asked if he could use the common pleas of bible saints. Canst thou say, with Hezekiah, *I beseech thee, O Lord, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight.* 2 Kings xx. 3. Has thy heart been perfect? has it not been altogether perverse and forward? and have not thy lips muttered perverseness, and thy tongue used deceit? yea, and thou hast even fled from the work of God. And canst thou plead like Jeremiah—*As for me I have not hastened from being a pastor to follow thee?* Jer. xvii. 16. Thou art so far from being able to use such pleas as these, that thou hast run from the work, and by thy peevish temper hast cast a slur upon it. Canst thou say, *Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and wipe not out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God, and for the offices thereof.* Neh. xiii. 14. Nay, said the plaintiff, thou hast been at times so far from this, that thou hast secretly wished that thou never hadst opened thy mouth at all. The plaintiff farther shewed that Prodigalis had been at times so hot upon religion as to neglect secular business, instead of being *a prudent man, and guiding his affairs with discretion,* Psalm cxii. 5; therefore could never use the common plea of Job—*If the land cry against me, or that the furrows thereof*

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*thereof complain, let thistles grow instead of wheat, and cockle instead of barley.* Job xxxi. 38. 40.

*Abimaaz.* O what a malicious plaintiff—what a subtle attorney—and what a keen accuser that old serpent is ! with what diligence does he watch for his opportunities to tempt poor thoughtless mortals ! It seems to be his whole study and anxiety ;—as the Saviour intimated to Peter, when he said, *Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have thee, that he may sift thee as wheat ; but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not.* Luke xxii. 31.

*Cushi.* To dishonour God—oppose his gospel—disturb his saints—and ruin sinners, is his whole employ ; however, all his accusations could not sink Prodigalis into despair, for he had got a good hope at the bottom, *which is an anchor of the soul both sure and stedfast.* Heb. vi. 19. Prodigalis was *persecuted by Satan, but not in despair ; he was cast down, but not destroyed.* 2 Cor. iv. 9. Indeed, at last he made a very good use of Satan's accusations ; for as Satan accused him of various sins, Prodigalis began to confess them to God as fast as the devil brought them forth ; this is making the best of a bad matter, and out-shooting the enemy with his own bow. The accuser, finding Prodigalis at this work, soon ceased his accusations, and began to dispute with him about his sonship. The plaintiff shewed, that the saints of God in the days of old could work miracles, and cast out devils ; but Prodigalis

digalis was so far from that power that he could not deliver himself from a temptation, much less work miracles. The poor soul on a sudden began to find the word of God flow in upon his mind, and he opened his mouth against his accuser in the following manner:

The defendant sheweth, That many have worked miracles that will never be saved. *Many will say in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and done many wonderful works?* unto whom the Saviour will say, *I never knew you.* The Egyptian magicians worked miracles, and yet were no children of God. Devils may work miracles, or lying wonders, and be devils still. Many workers of miracles the Saviour will refuse in the great day; but a pardoned sinner, a believer in his name, he will never disown. The defendant shewed moreover, that the devil wanted the Saviour to satisfy him of his being the Son of God, by starting an *if*, and desiring a miracle: *If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.* Matt. iv. 3. But the Saviour would not satisfy his adversary by a miracle, but left him to doubt who he was, or to find it out: which Satan soon did, when he perceived that no temptation gained ground. But he felt who he was when he entered upon his ministry—cast out devils—and by his own almighty power began to destroy Satan's works.

The adversary gaining no ground upon Prodigalis by this, went back and puzzled him again upon the old text, *He that is born of God sinneth not*: and here he foiled the poor man; for he had not a right understanding of that text; nor could he with conscience use the ancient saints' common pleas. On these two heads the plaintiff gained ground: therefore Prodigalis was obliged to turn away his ears from common pleas, and make use of them that are too seldom used. For after the accuser had gained a considerable advantage of him from the text above quoted; namely, that *he that is born of God sinneth not*, the defendant cried out, *The blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin.* 1 John i. 7. This put the accuser to silence. The defendant finding that, produced another promise, saying, It is written, *Behold I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall by any means hurt you.* Luke x. 19. This weakened the temptation greatly: therefore Prodigalis followed him up again, saying, It is written, *My heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord*: in love my heart is fixed; nor can all your wiles ever make me hate my Sovereign, or make me loyal in your interest: therefore I am upon the rock; and it is written, *That the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.* Matt. xvi. 18. *It is written, it is written*, gives a terrible blow to the accuser: he cannot stand the sword of the Spirit, nor the power



power of the Saviour, who is the sinner's only plea. "No falsehood can stand the touch of celestial temper," says Milton.

*Abimaaz.* It is a blessed thing to be well instructed in the word of God: the word of truth is both sword and shield. It is *through the comforts of the scriptures we have hope.* The Bible should be read by every believer as the will of his heavenly Father, in which lies his vast inheritance; secured by absolute and unconditional promises, which were made to Christ, and to us in him, and all ratified with a divine Yea and Amen.

The whole covenant of promise that was made with the Saviour, and all the promises and blessings of that covenant, were given by the Father to the Son, and by the Son to us: *For I have given them the words which thou gavest me, and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee; and they have believed that thou didst send me.* John xvii. 8. And all these covenant promises and blessings will be found in the church in the great day, when the earth and all her works will be burnt up; yea, when all books are burnt up, Bibles and all, the Spirit of God, and the word of God, will then be found in the church of Christ. *As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord; my Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for*

*for ever.* Isa. lix. 21. Thus the word and the Spirit will return in the church unto God, the fountain of all divine happiness, and the eternal centre from whom every blessing came to the church, and in whom they all must terminate with the church.

The great and grand end that the Almighty aimed at in his great works is, *That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.* Eph. ii. 7. The word and spirit which are compared to rain, shall never leave the world till all the elect are called, made fruitful, and meetened for glory by it. *For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater : so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth : it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.* Isa. lv. 10, 11. Pray, observe the above text: the end of a shower is to give *bread to the eater*; so God's word and Spirit, compared thereto, is to make us, *being many, one bread*, 1 Cor. x. 17, that as the *shew bread, or the bread of faces*, was set on the golden table in the most holy place every sabbath day; even so shall God's elect be presented (not like Ephraim, *a cake not turned*, Hosea vii. 8, but perfectly leavened by the Holy Ghost) in the presence

presence of God ; to the glory, honour, pleasure, and satisfaction of every attribute of God, who in the end will be all and all ; when the eternal sabbath (of which the Jewish was a sign) shall arrive.

O how sweet is the word of God ! and what a pity that so many real Christians are so little acquainted with it. What profound mysteries does it sometimes disclose, when we can read it in the language of our own heart's experience, and feel its divine force and operations, as the blessed Spirit is pleased to move on those holy waters of the sanctuary.

It is in perusing the word that we converse with the Father in his secret decrees and purposes ; with the blessed Redeemer in his great undertakings, sufferings, and soul-comforting discourses ; and with the blessed Spirit, who spoke by the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles. Yea, I have often found the sweetest companions, and the greatest company, when I have been alone. It is by the Spirit's operation, by the bond of love, by a unity of sentiment, and by a unity of the faith of God's elect, that *we come to the general assembly and church of the firstborn which are written in heaven.* It is by our arraignment and justification *that we come to God the judge of all ;* and by the Spirit's operation that *we come to the spirits of just men made perfect.* Believing in Jesus for life and salvation, *is coming to the Mediator of the new covenant :* and receiving the atonement by faith,  
is

*is coming to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.* Heb. xii. 23, 24.

O how I love a Bible Christian ! A believer who is not a constant reader of his Bible is like a soldier without arms. The reason of so many being led astray into all manner of errors is, because they take their religion up upon trust, and so fix their *faith on the wisdom of men*, instead of the *power of God*. Christ tells us to *search the scriptures*. The prophet says, *To the law and to the testimony ; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.* And in Job we are commanded to pray for divine teaching : *What I know not teach thou me.*

I will never believe that so many would be led to credit the doctrines of Universalists, if they were convinced of the necessity of divine teaching, and led to receive it from the Bible. They would find no universal grace, nor universal redemption there : nor is there any signs of it in the world at present ; for its inhabitants seem to get worse and worse. But do give me a little further account of Prodigalis.

*Cushi.* The advocates for free-will, human power, and universal grace, may extend their own pity and compassion as far as they please : but divine grace and mercy are the properties and prerogatives of God : and therefore they have no right nor warrant to be so profuse and lavish with that which is not their own. But to proceed. After Prodigalis had put his accuser to silence with the force of truth, these

these words were applied with power to his mind, *Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.* Heb. iv. 16. This was a reproof to Prodigalis, who had neglected that most blessed duty and privilege of prayer. It was likewise to encourage him in future. And the latter part of the text convinced him that he would often stand in need of mercy and help; and that if he would have those blessings he must pray for them. He obeyed the invitation; and set his *face, to seek God by prayer and supplication*, though it was with much shame and confusion of face at first: for his unbelief, his cowardice, his murmuring, and his omitting prayer, reading, speaking, and hearing the word, all stared him in the face. The Lord will not be neglected nor slighted without giving us his sensible disapprobation of it. The Lord's look upon Peter conveyed both reproof and pity; and Peter felt both when he wept bitterly.

But notwithstanding all the faults of poor Prodigalis, the blessed Saviour visited him again with his great salvation, and sealed pardon and peace home on his heart afresh, to let him know that peace should be multiplied; which so established his faith in the unchangeable love of God, that he was ready to say in this his prosperity, *My mountain stands so strong I shall never be moved.* Satan now disappeared, and Prodigalis went on again in the work and worship of the Lord; and, if possible, he

he shined brighter, was more humble, and more useful in it than usual. It was with Prodigalis, in a measure, as it was with his Master; *After Satan had ended all the temptations, Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit*; and so did he: for he brought many comfortable discourses out of this fiery trial; and was more capable of sympathizing with, and succouring the tempted, than ever he had been before.

*Abimaaz.* Of all fathers, and of all friends, of all parental and conjugal affections, there is none that bears the least resemblance to that love and pity that flows to penitent sinners from the *Father of all mercies, and God of all comfort through Jesus Christ*. It is so affecting to me, that I never can feel it without the deepest contrition; nor can I even hear of the manifestation of it to others, without finding *my head furnished with water, and mine eyes a fountain of tears*. God the Father's love, and the sufferings of Jesus Christ, to procure so great salvation for the greatest of sinners, when applied by the Holy Ghost, strikes a man dead to sin, and to all the world. A soul in spiritual union with the Saviour, and favoured with a believing view of the benefits of his death, with a feeling sense of his interest in it, and with the enjoyment of pardon and peace procured by it, receives so deep an impression of divinity, and feels so weighty a sensation, that, if it were to continue, it would be impossible for an human soul in this life to sustain it. The  
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soul dissolves in it as an ointment; all company is burdensome; and the body would be so neglected, that it would not be able to contain its heavenly inhabitant. Hence it is, that we so often feel strong conflicts before we receive these kind indulgences, and have them generally counterbalanced with some succeeding affliction, which is to keep the soul in an even scale; it being part earthly and part heavenly. And it may be observed, that the draft is daily felt in one or other of these balances.

Go on, my brother.—You must excuse my breaking in upon you; for when any part of the narrative of Prodigalis agrees with my own experience of the Saviour's great mercy to me, my bowels yearn, and my heart is ready to burst; I am obliged therefore to imitate Elihu, *Speak, that I may be eased.*

*Cushi.* Why, Prodigalis, after this, went on in a very comfortable and successful way; and for a considerable time seemed well established, and was eminently useful; and as he was remarkably fond of study, and private retirement, he kept up a close communion with his God; and being of an heavenly mind, his pleasing element was divine meditation; these, with the deep experience of his heart, furnished him both with word and power for the ministerial work, better than all the universities and academies in the world. A graceless collegian understood no more of his celestial oratory than Prodigalis did of Arabic.

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In process of time it happened that various errors began to spread and gain ground in those parts where his ministerial work lay ; and as Prodigalis had not been suffered to stumble into any of those errors, he was at a loss for argument to oppose them. Several of the false ambassadors challenged and often disputed with Prodigalis ; you know there are none more daring, more confident, or more bold, than those that are hardened under the gospel, and blinded by the devil. In order to furnish himself with weapons for these champions, Prodigalis took to reading several books of their tenets, that he might dive into their errors, and overthrow their arguments. This dry, barren, and soul-destroying study, soon brought Prodigalis from his heavenly-mindedness ; and the sweet refreshing dew that used daily to fall on his soul was sensibly withheld. These books brought an heavy gloom on his mind, which beclouded his understanding ; and some of their subtle, cunning, artful, crafty, and sophistical arguments, at times puzzled his judgment, though his heart and soul heaved with indignation against the whole of their works.

Now was the time for Satan to work again ; and as Prodigalis had been a little lifted up through the abundance of the revelations, some of these errors was a thorn in his flesh, and *as messengers of Satan they buffeted him* (which God permitted), *lest he should be exalted above measure.* 2 Cor. xii. 7. The devil set in with many of those errors, and gained  
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a second advantage over him, until by buffeting his mind, by suggesting these errors perpetually to him, he sensibly wounded Prodigalis in his judgment, filled his soul with confusion, and kept truth and falsehood in a perpetual debate on his mind. This withered all his joys, banished peace and comfort from his heart, and left him to bemoan a sensible suspension of spiritual life and divine consolation.

*Abimaaz.* O how dangerous are erroneous books ! What havoc have they made in the church of Christ ! They are nets which the Lord permits the infernal fowler to spread, in order to catch hypocrites, who receive not the truth in the love of it, and to humble some of his own children, who, instead of *trusting in the Lord with all their hearts, lean too much to their own understanding.*

Prodigalis had no business to fish in any such waters, but to dive deeper and deeper into the mystery and spirit of God's truth : truth is sufficient both for shield and buckler. Let a man arm himself with this, and through grace he will be able to stand and withstand. Nothing overthrows error like plain and simple truth brought from God by prayer ; and the knowledge of it, the experience of it, and the practice of it insisted on by the power of the Holy Ghost. These things, delivered by one who has an experience of them, attended with a solemn appeal to God and conscience, carry all before them, except the presumptuous, whom God

in just judgment, and to their own destruction, permits, like Jannes and Jambres, imperiously to stand their ground.

For my part, I hate to see a young Christian trying the strength of his judgment by an erroneous book, or an erroneous ministry. I always think it is a daring presumptuous tempting of God, and provoking of him to leave us exposed to the temptations of the devil, as a proof of his disapprobation, and a just reproof for our presumption. *All that ever came before me, saith the Saviour, were thieves and robbers; but the sheep did not hear them.* John x. 8. And many such thieves and robbers are yet to come; and we are commanded not to follow them: *And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many.* Matt. xxiv. 4, 5. *And many false prophets shall arise, and shall deceive many.* Matt. xxiv. 11. *Go not after them, nor follow them.* Luke xvii. 23. *Take heed how ye hear. Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees, which is hypocrisy.* All these are warnings and cautions that we should not tempt God. He commands us to *beware of dogs*, Phil. iii. 2; and not to be so fond of *taking them by the ears.* Prov. xxvi. 17.

The Lord grant that I may ever exercise my mind in the knowledge of good, and not study the mysteries of *spiritual wickedness*. Eph. vi. 12. Adam and Eve were happy while they knew only good; but

but when they attained to the knowledge of evil, they soon found the "knowledge of evil got, and "of good lost," as saith the learned Milton: and so many happy souls have found it since, by diving into the infernal mysteries of ghostly iniquity. *It is life eternal to know God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent*; while, on the other hand, the devils, who are masters of arts with respect to their knowledge of the mysteries of iniquity, are as far from happiness as divine felicity can place them. Some indeed read all sorts of authors, in order to obtain the right knowledge of God, and the way of salvation, by human means. And we may say of them, as a great apostle saith, *They are ever learning, but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.* The Star of Jacob can never be found out by a telescope: nor can a saving knowledge of God be obtained by all the lines of practical philosophy. The man into whose heart God shines knows him, but no other. *For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.* 2 Cor. iv. 6. This is the only revealed way that a saving knowledge of God can be attained in: philosophical rules are wholly excluded in this matter: *Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit; after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.* Col. ii. 8.

Cusbi. I much admire your assertions. Divine

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knowledge must be sought with a suppliant knee at a throne of grace ; to seek it any other way is a contempt of the revealed will of God, and an attempt to be wise above what is written. And the farther they go to find out God by human means, the deeper they sink into error. To measure divine perfections, and divine conduct, by human lines, and tracing all from the proper centre, down to the bar of depraved and unrenewed reason, is puzzling the human soul in her fallen state, and loading her rationality with a burden, under which she is sure (without divine aid) to sink.

When any child of God meets with a difficult text of scripture, a difficult experience, or providence, how is his mind burdened, until by humble prayer he cast it off, or resolve it in the sovereign will of his God ; which, when done, his faculties resume their usual vigour, and he moves sweetly in his heavenly sphere ; and by these things he finds that God lays no more on him than he enables him to bear.

Many have been drowned in error, open profanity, despondency, despair, destruction, and perdition, by attempting the knowledge of Infinite Divinity by human wisdom, instead of submitting human wisdom to that which is divine and infinite. *Who can find out the Almighty to perfection ? it is higher than heaven, and deeper than hell ; broader than the earth, and wider than the sea.* Job xi. 7, 8, 9. It has puzzled many of the learned naturalists

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in the world to unfold the mysteries of the thunder, and those strange phænomenas the burning mountains. In these things they are just as much at an uncertainty as Moore's Almanac is in its predictions, from the aspects of the planets, concerning the weather, which, from the best observations that I have made, have hitherto been contrary to the events produced by Providence.

The real believer, when he hath considered his frame, can with humble adoration say with the Psalmist, *I am fearfully and wonderfully made*. And with respect to the works of creation, and all the mysteries of nature, he can admire their Author, and say, *In wisdom hast thou made them all*.

But to proceed.—This was one of the most puzzling trials that ever Prodigalis had met with; for when the arch enemy had gained an advantage over him, and blinded his understanding, there was not a mystery in the Bible but he put his *if* to, and attempted to raise doubts in his mind about. The mystery of the Trinity; the wonderful mystery of our Lord's incarnation and essential divinity; the veracity and authenticity of the Bible; the existence of Jehovah; and even the existence of fallen angels, was not left out of the dreadful dispute; though Prodigalis had sensibly felt the power, and wonderfully seen the workings of all things then in debate. O how careful should a child of God be to avoid these things! How many have gone limping and halting to their graves, broken in judgment, barren

in soul, fruitless in life, and confused in mind, only by reading erroneous books !

This trial effectually cured Prodigalis of that disease. After this he acted like those in the Acts ; *And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds. Many of them also which used curious arts, brought their books together, and burned them before all men : and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver : so mighty grew the word of God and prevailed.* Acts xix. 18, 19, 20. Ancient books of curious arts, and modern books of cursed errors, are both of one lineage ; all came from one infernal source, and lead to the same infernal end. Embracing of an error is receiving a lie ; and holding of a lie is certain destruction. *And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie ; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.* Rev. xxi. 27.

*Abimaaz.* I have no doubt but that fiery trial cured Prodigalis of that disease. It was with him as it was with the Jews ; they were in general doating upon idols until their Babylonish captivity ; but the commandment of the king of Babylon *in the plains of Dura*, Dan. iii. 1, was a sufficient purge to cleanse them : at their return Ephraim was heard to say, *What have I to do any more with idols ?* Hosea xiv. 8.

*Cushi.* It was for many months that Prodigalis lay  
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lay in that confused and bewildered state ; and yet, at the same time, never advanced in public one sentence but what was point blank against those errors that his mind was harassed with ; but surely nothing but an experience of a work of grace, and the mighty power of God, can ever keep a soul found in the truth through such strange, mysterious, and confused wanderings. However, it was an humbling lesson to Prodigalis, which none but God and himself knew ; and the application of this text sunk him into a very strange frame of mind ; *Hear ye, and give ear ; be not proud ; for the Lord hath spoken. Give glory to the Lord your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains ; and while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness.* Jer. xiii. 15, 16. Nor was it without a deal of hard wrestling with God in prayer that he got deliverance ; God made him feel the binding effects of error, that he might be satisfied with the knowledge of truth, and not launch into the perilous deep of confusion, where there is no anchorage.

The first text that came as a prelude to his deliverance was, *They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine.* Isa. xxix. 24. The blessed Redeemer appeared again, and set matters to rights both in his conscience and judgment ; but yet left him for some years to feel a sensible breach in his spirit,

which served as a mark for Satan to cast his darts at. This was to convince him, that he had displeased the Lord in his curious diving into the infernal depths of Satan, which Prodigalis was sensible of. Yet in the end it turned out to some good effect. For after this he was very self-diffident; very earnest in cautioning others against error; and saw that nothing but a real experience of the truth, and a living faith in omnipotent power, could ever keep any soul in such a fiery trial. From this time he became a most zealous reprovcr and opposer of error; which gave disgust to many who were entire strangers to his conflicts, and therefore altogether ignorant of his inward sufferings, and of the wretched bitterness that had been communicated to his mind. Many of his hearers judged him, and condemned his spirit, his zeal, experience, and ministry. But soon after, God permitted a few of them to feel the same; which served to quench their love to these ministers of falsehood, and led them to prize the truth the more, and those that are zealous advocates for it; such as these afterwards became his most stedfast and most faithful friends. They began to find and feel the worth of him as an instrument; and were fully persuaded, that if God should remove him they would sensibly feel their loss. However, by some of no experience, his zeal was condemned as a bad spirit; his levelling the force of truth against errors, was called personal reflections; and his close attachment to his own testimony was called



called singularity : and if, by following the divine tuition of God, he stept but one inch from the rules of commentators, he was charged with being erroneous, though none of his enemies could prove him a minister of error either in life or doctrine.

*Abimaaz.* Every faint (as Job says) *must see God for himself and not for another* : they must receive their gospel from God by the power of his Spirit, if they preach so as to *save themselves and them that hear them*. The apostle could boast, that the gospel that he preached *was not after man* ; that *he learned it not of man, neither was he taught it but by the revelation of Jesus Christ*. Gal. i. 12. It is a most daring piece of wickedness to oppose a man in his own personal testimony for God, when he is able to prove it to be consonant with the scriptures, and supports it by the same. For my part, I believe that all whom the Lord sends into his vineyard to labour, can give some account of the reason of the hope that is in them : but there are some sent out by dissenting academies, and from our universities, who pretend they are sent, or inwardly moved, by the Holy Ghost to take that office upon them : but they take pretty good care never to inform the church of God at large how that inward moving was begun and carried on in them : and what is still worse, they often oppose those that can.

God is a sovereign, and he will proclaim it ; and I much question, if ever he leaves the earth without some witness or other, who will be deemed by  
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some an irregular, and by others a bigoted disseminator. To monopolize the gospel, or confine it to any party or set of men, is like making an hedge round a cuckoo, in order to detain her all the winter.

*Cushi.* I have heard of late that some have expunged the book of Esther from their studies as nothing but a dry history, not canonical; though the whole contents of it are the sufferings of the church, the salvation of God's elect, the fulfilment of prophecies, and the experience of God's favourites; all which harmonize exactly with all the other sacred books of scripture.

However, Prodigalis steadfastly taught the doctrines that God had applied to his heart; he enforced the power that himself had felt; and endeavoured, according to his light received, to back it with the word of God. Nor were his labours in vain; God owned it to the salvation of many souls; nor did he ever, after this sharp trial, pry with a vain curiosity into the mysteries of Satan. The Bible, and the books of good men, were sufficient to satisfy him; and I wish that every child of God were contented with the same.

After this fiery trial he did not mount so uncommonly high in his joys as usual; but he walked in a more steady faith and frame of mind: not so easily cast down as formerly, nor lifted up to such an amazing height in divine raptures. In short, the devil could neither destroy his hope, nor prevail

vail with him to doubt of his interest in the Saviour : yet he travelled on with much brokenness of heart before God, and laboured hard under a daily sense of his manifold infirmities.

*Abimaaz.* I have often found my mind sensibly injured and wounded only by the rehearsal of an error, and the sophistical garb in which an advocate for the devil had swaddled it up, in order to degrade the truth of God, and deceive the hearts of the simple, which is no wonder ; for it is the just that the devil aims to injure ; he hath the wicked in his own possession. Hence it is that he cannot deceive the godly without blending the truth with his lies ; and the more truth the more taking, as may be seen in the word of God. The temptation that he brought to Eve had some of God's word in it ; and so had that which he brought to the Saviour : though both were perverted so as to lead to presumption : for in all Satan's turnings and windings he always pursues one end, which is, the promotion of his own kingdom, to the dishonour of God in the destruction of souls.

O how many are there in this day, and some that I personally know, who have been seduced from a tolerable profession of the gospel, and from an apparent reformation, only by reading the cursed systems of error, which to this day are so harnessed with it, that, as the prophet says, *Truth is fallen, and equity cannot enter*, Isa. lix. 15 ; the delusion is so strong.

Such profelytes will add to the torments of those who have left their cursed traps behind them ; and as they have appeared as blind leaders in this world, they will appear supreme in misery in the next. Such men *die not in their own sin only*, Numb. xxvii. 3 ; but they have entailed the sins and destruction of thousands on the score of their own souls ; *having shut up the kingdom of heaven against men ; not entering themselves, nor suffering others to enter.*

I have seen erroneous men in such a light as can never be described : but the great day will reveal it : the whole mystery of iniquity shall be discovered by *the brightness of the Lord's rising, and be consumed with the breath of his lips.*

Cushi. However, this is a comfort, that though it be said, *if it were possible they should deceive the very elect* ; yet that little *if* is worth a thousand worlds ; for it renders it an impossibility for a chosen vessel to be finally deceived ; and surely Prodigalis is a living witness of this truth ; and this trial of his cured his ears of their itching, and convinced him of the need of studying and sticking close to the book of God. He found that error, as well as the least transgression, made sad breaches in his comfortable union and communion with his ever blessed Saviour ; which is the life and soul of all real religion. And indeed he found it no easy work to obtain it again ; which when obtained made him prize it the more,

more, and made him the more fearful to offend.

*Abimaaz.* For my part I have not a doubt but these things were made useful to him in his future ministry: for, as he had sensibly felt the bondage and confusion of error, it must serve as a spur to his future zeal in opposing error with the force of truth, because his own soul had felt the wretched effects of it.

*Cushi.* Indeed *all things work together for good to them that love God, and are the called according to his purpose.* But Christ tells us to *take heed how we hear*; and Prodigalis has seen that text in its true meaning, and obediently took the caution; and is effectually convinced, that nothing less than an heart-felt experience of the truth, the teachings of the Holy Ghost, and the Lord's supporting hand, could ever keep a man sound in the faith, when strongly opposed either by the devil or his agents.

*Abimaaz.* And was the latter part of his life smooth and even? Did he continue steadfast in his testimony, and industrious in the ministry of the word?

*Cushi.* He continues steadfast for aught I know, to this day; but as for an even path, I believe that seldom lasts long with such an one as he. When a man has been desperately wicked from his youth, and accustomed to many evil practices; if such an one be called by grace, he has his old besetting sins to struggle with; they will pursue him;

him; and although the goodness of God is so great as to *keep him by his mighty power, through faith unto salvation*; yet his old habitual customs the devil often brings strongly to his mind: and if these are indulged, even but in thought, divine comforts are oft abated. Against these he long prayed, and at times thought he greatly prevailed: but to his sorrow he still feels, that *when he would do good, evil is present with him*. He often envied those who had been kept from the vices and follies of childhood and youth; judging that they had not such habitual customs of evil to grapple with, as those that have run with the reins on their own necks into an open course of wickedness. He always said, that the best antidote against the troublesome thoughts of vanity was—labouring in the ministry, private study, private meditation, private prayer, private communion with God, and spiritual conversation with sound and lively Christians. In these things he delighted as in his most pleasing element. But he was very cautious not to stand in the way of sinners; nor yet, in any dispute with the wicked or erroneous, give up one single article of the testimony that God had applied to his heart; finding it so consistent with the unerring word of God, which must ever be our rule. Prodigalis knew that *the prudent were crowned with knowledge*; and that crown we must not give up. *Hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown*, says the Saviour.

*Abimaaz.*

*Abimaaz.* Those souls that are kept in their youth from an open course of wickedness, have not those cutting and bitter reflections, when brought under convictions, that the vile and vicious have; yet I have often observed, that their former legality has stuck as close to their souls to keep them in bondage, as the bad practices of others do to bring them into sin. I myself was kept very upright and moral through all the days of my natural state, to outward appearance; but, alas! *God sees not as man sees; man looks at the outward appearance, but God looketh on the heart,* 1 Sam. xvi. 7; and so I found it, for my self-sufficiency, self-righteousness, and legal pride:—these heart sins were as detestable in the eyes of the Lord as the open profanity even of Prodigalis himself. And although his arraignment and trial was dreadful to pass through, yet his wonderful deliverance afforded as strong a consolation as the other did a grievous affliction.

Besides, my brother, you know that none but the elect are called: *Whom he did predestinate, these he also called.* And the elect are all known of God: *Whom he did foreknow, them he did predestinate.* This being the case, *the bounds of their habitation,* the place and time of their conversion, yea, the manner how, and even the *mouth made choice of,* Acts xv. 7, in order to convey the word of life to their conversion, is all fore-appointed, and immutably fixed in the eternal decree. Therefore, whether their life, in their unconverted state, be openly wicked,

or legally upright, it is according to divine permission.

The apostle Paul was a chosen vessel, although he went such a singular length in persecuting the saints even unto death. God permitted him to go thus far, that in the conversion of such a man it might be proclaimed to the world, what free and irresistible grace could do : *Howbeit, for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.* 1 Tim. i. 16.

*Cushi.* All those things are true; yet for my part I would rather have been kept from open vice in my natural state, than have been permitted to fall into it. Our Lord takes notice of this in Peter, who according to his own account had *walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries.* 1 Pet. iv. 3. I say the Lord takes notice of this; and well he might : *Verily, verily, I say unto thee [Peter], when thou wast young thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst; but, when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not.* John xxi. 18. Such poor miserable sinners as Peter, Prodigalis, and myself, have a deal to suffer; and though God doth abundantly pardon, Isa. lv. 7, yet such cannot forgive themselves; the thoughts of their wretched wicked life, and of the abuse of God's long-suffering

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ing mercy, is cause of much mourning in secret. But eternal election to life sweetens all. For such can often look back and see that the afflicting hand of God hath often been upon them, and his preventing or delivering hand hath often been with them, even from the cradle. *I led Ephraim* (said God), *but he knew it not.*—*I girded thee* [Cyrus], *though thou hast not known me.* Isa. xlv. 5. In short, all the elect may say with the Psalmist, *Thou hast been with me from my mother's womb*: or with Jacob, *God hath fed me all my life long unto this day.*

*Abimaaz.* I am sure I can say the same. For, notwithstanding my outward shew of religion, I felt perpetually the accusations of a guilty conscience; and I knew that I indulged myself in many secret sins, which both God and conscience were privy to. Thus I can see that God gave me many a check, even in my blind state. In short, both the pharisee and the publican are dead in soul until quickened by grace: the painted sepulchre, and the sow in the mire, are both of a piece, and both on a level, under the law, and both in unbelief, and consequently both in a state of condemnation. And this God often made me feel by many secret lashes of conscience. For I knew that I was not that man in heart that I appeared to be in life; and as a confounded and abashed hypocrite I have often stood at the bar of my own conscience; for I knew that all my works and shew of religion was only to be seen of men: *And how can such believe, who*  
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*receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?* John v. 44. The best of men in a state of nature, when once God begins to work on their souls, are like the antediluvians, between two floods—the inundations of guilt—and the floodgates of wrath.—But do tell me how Prodigalis went on after his last trial.

*Cushi.* For some time his communion with his Lord was close and sweet; and while this was enjoyed, his discourses were very heavenly and rapturous; insomuch that poor distressed and doubting souls could get nothing under him; he was too high for them, and too much filled with the joys of heaven to come down to their disagreeable feelings; for you know *it is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaketh*: therefore the poor weaklings of the flock could only bear witness to the light of his countenance, and envy him his happiness. He preached up holiness likewise to a very high pitch; insomuch that you would have thought at times that he had been perfect.

*Abimaaz.* If that was the case, poor broken-hearted sinners, and those buffeted by the devil, could get but little sympathy from him. For tempted souls, that are labouring under the plague of their own heart, think themselves as far from holiness as Satan himself; when at the same time it is the quickening and illuminating power of the Holy Ghost that makes them feel and see the evil  
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of their hearts. I have heard men preach as if divine holiness were to be produced and put in practice by flesh and blood. They call for heart holiness, family holiness, life holiness, insomuch that I have gone groaning home, and crying out, I have no holiness at all.

*Cushi.* Yes ; and there are many double-refined pharisees in the world, that are destitute of the Spirit of God, who yet appear in all that outward garb of holiness that such call for. I have heard people preach up holiness in that way : but unless a man tells me where holiness is to be got, and how holiness has operated on his own heart, I generally conclude that he knows but little of the matter.

The Bible informs me, that *Jehovah is the holy One. There is none holy as the Lord ; for there is none besides thee.* 1 Sam. ii. 2. God is the only fountain of holiness, and the elect have their holiness from him. *We have had fathers of our flesh, which corrected us, and we gave them reverence ; shall we not rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live ? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure, but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.* Heb. xii. 9, 10.

The sanctification of a believer is, first, in Christ his Head ; *He is made of God unto us sanctification, and redemption.* 1 Cor. i. 30. In Christ the believer's sanctification is complete : *Ye are complete in him.*

Col. ii. 10. Christ says, *Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee.* Song iv. 7.

Secondly, The believer's sanctification is also by the Spirit of God: *Elect according to the fore-knowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.* 1 Pet. i. 2.

Thus you see the believer is complete in Christ his Head, and sanctified in part by the Holy Ghost, though he be not thereby made perfect in this life: for if we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. This is all the holiness that the Bible speaks of; and this is the holiness that every real believer partakes of: and it is called, by way of eminence and distinction, true holiness, in opposition to that which is false and feigned, and only makes a noise, and an outward show in the world. Wherever this holiness is found, it is the workmanship of God, and the glory of Christ's image. *That ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness,* Eph. iv. 24; *after the image of him that created him.* Col. iii. 10.

The soul that is united to Christ by the bond of love, and sanctified by the Holy Ghost, is a *holy man of God*, 2 Pet. i. 21; and walks in the path of holiness, Isa. xxxv. 8; his conversation will be holy, 1 Pet. i. 15; and he has his fruit unto holiness, and his end everlasting life. Rom. vi. 22. All closet holiness, family holiness, or life holiness, that springs  
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not from this root, or flows not from this fountain, is only the varnish of a hypocrite, and may be found or seen on those whose hearts are filled with covetousness, and where legal pride is enthroned, and Satanic rebellion encouraged.

*Abimaaz.* He that cleaveth the closest to the Saviour will ever be the most holy in heart, and the most fruitful in life : *He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit ; for without me ye can do nothing.* And that man will ever be the most happy whose heart is the most steadfast with the Lord : *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee.* Isa. xxvi. 3. But do inform me how Prodigalis went on, and how long he continued on the mount.

*Cushi.* Why, after he had been some time in this exalted frame, and had delivered many discourses as it were from the very threshold of heaven, the Lord was pleased to bring him under a strange discipline. In his private study he was very happy, and the scriptures were open to him, insomuch that he generally went from his study furnished with a text, and the various heads of doctrine contained in it lay plain in his view, and often afforded him much comfort ; but when he began to speak, he found neither liberty in spirit nor in speech ; a gloomy confusion came gradually over his mind ; his thoughts fled from him, he lost sight of his subject, and his treacherous memory refused to give back what had been committed to it. This disagreeable straitness

of soul rendered the ministry a burden to him; for he never had experienced much before this of being *bound in the spirit*; which was the more puzzling to him.

Having been exercised a few times this way, he began to complain to his flock of the various changes that passed on his mind, and of the difficult experiences that he had been exercised with. These things reached the hearts of the tried ones, and they gathered food under it; which was quite a mystery to Prodigalis; that a man in misery should be a minister of comfort. They appeared to him in no better light than the Philistines, who shouted against Samson when he was bound, but dared not so much as look him in the face when he was free. The weak and feeble believers, being so joyful, provoked him to spiritual jealousy. His adversaries hearing his complaints, and perceiving him at times to falter in his speech, triumphed over him: while the Antinomian hypocrites, who hated his experience, who talk of faith and religion, while strangers to the power of both, were in daily expectation that his mouth would be stopped, and his ministry and profession sink into obscurity, and plague them no more.

Besides, he soon found that the bands that he felt in the pulpit followed him into his study likewise, until he went mourning all the day long. He had not arrived to that profound depth of experience that Paul had when he said, *And whether we*  
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*be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer; or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation. 2 Cor. i. 6.*

*Abimaaz.* Though I often appeared so forward formerly to run with tidings, yet since I have been called by grace, I have trembled for fear it should ever fall to my lot. I see it the most important work under the sun. A minister, as a public person, has many that will cleave to him, which are looking to him, and depending on him, under God, for instruction; and these persons he must be accountable for, as a ruler of the household; which if he lead wrong, their blood is on his head: for they depend on him, by taking him to be what he pretends to be, namely, God's saint, God's servant, God's ambassador, and God's mouth. This is what every real minister is, and this is what every false preacher pretends to be, as well as a true one. If he be a false prophet, he will spit his venom at those that are true, and, to the utmost of his power, endeavour to vindicate himself in these characters, which his arrogance has assumed; and blind, and bind all to him that he can. If he be a real believer in Jesus Christ, and one that is sent of God, he is right in vindicating himself in the above characters, and in declaring God's plain truth, as he hath felt it in his own heart; and as he lives it in his own life, he is a true saint, servant, and ambassador of Christ, and a faithful leader: he delivers

his own soul, by declaring the whole counsel of God ; and clears himself of the blood of those that perish in their sins ; and is a minister of the Spirit to those who are truly spiritual.

While, on the other hand, he that is a deceiver comes in God's name, who never sent him : he says he is sent of God, or inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost, when he never was ; personates God, whom he is a stranger to ; appears in an office that God never conferred on him, and opposes those whom Christ hath sent. Hence poor deluded souls, by believing his lies, look to him for instruction, as God's servant, when he is not : and if he prevails with them to adhere to, and live and die in his delusions, both the leader and the led end in destruction together ; or, as Christ saith, *The blind lead the blind, until both fall into the ditch.*

*Cuspi.* What you have said is true : but Prodigalis was no deceiver ; *He went forth and wrought, and the Lord worked with him, and confirmed his word with many signs.* But to be brief about his next trial. This bondage in his pulpit soon followed him home to his study, as was before observed, and at a throne of grace also, until his life, as well as his ministerial work, became both labour and sorrow.

Under this most distressing and most miserable cross, Prodigalis found dreadful murmuring and complaining : his old besetting sins began to call for some acknowledgement of past favours, and  
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offered their pleasures in this his comfortless situation, if by any means they might gain a little lost favour, be a present prop, or lend a little present assistance toward lengthening of his tranquillity.

This bait was not altogether unseasonable. Darkness and bondage in prayer; the same in study; the same in company; the same in the pulpit,—made him catch at comfort from any quarter. Carnal comforts are never represented to an heaven-born soul in so delusive a garb, as when divine consolations are fled. *When the good man is not at home, but is on a long journey, and hath taken the bag of money with him;* then it is that the world comes with her much fair speech, and flattering lips, in order to cause us to yield. Prov. vii. 19, 20, 21.

Now was the time for Satan to work; and as he found that all divine comforts were gone, by the groaning petitions of Prodigalis; and that many of his former besetting sins began to gain upon his affections, and to meet with a little indulgence, though it was but in thought; yet the devil drew him, before ever he was aware, to the court of conscience, and made his appeal to the heart, the thoughts, and even to the very conscience of Prodigalis.

First, the Plaintiff shewed, That his heart was got cold to the work, worship, people, and ways of God; which the Defendant could not deny: for as he had met with nothing but frowns of late, in the ways of God, and as all divine comforts had left him,

him, he could not deny but that earthly comforts had been indulged and embraced by him, as a rival to the God of all comfort.

Secondly, The Plaintiff shewed, that the life of a real christian was such, as never to offend either God, conscience, or men; that the real saint was one that *exercised himself day and night, always to have a conscience void of offence both toward God and towards men.* Acts xxiv. 16.

Thirdly, That Prodigalis *had left his first love,* Rev. ii. 4; that *as iniquity had abounded, his love had waxed cold;* and therefore he had apostatised in heart from his God. Nor could he be deemed one of the number of them that persevere; *for he that endureth to the end [in his first love] shall be saved.*

The plaintiff farther shewed, That the thoughts of Prodigalis were often very carnal; and that instead of having *every thought brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,* at certain seasons he had not a thought for Christ.

Fourthly, That Prodigalis not only allowed these wanderings of heart, but at times really encouraged them, and seemed to be entertained by them, especially when the presence of his Lord was gone; and therefore he could not say, *I hate vain thoughts, but thy law do I love.*

Fifthly, The Plaintiff shewed, That he not only indulged these *vain thoughts that lodged within him;* but that in the hours of sensible desertion he had endeavoured to suck comfort from them.

Sixthly,

Sixthly, That in some of his peevish fits he had even envied the happiness of the wicked, *who are not in trouble as other men, nor plagued like other folks.*

Seventhly, That he had gone so far in this his peevishness as to *call the proud happy, whom God resisteth*; and in his deep poverty he had called the *covetous blessed, whom the Lord abhorreth.*

Eighthly, The Plaintiff further shewed, That Prodigalis had not only given in to them in heart and word, but that *he had been brought into captivity to the law of sin that is in his members.*

Ninthly, The Plaintiff appealed to the heart, thoughts, and conscience of Prodigalis for confirmation; and asked, if he could say, *That his rejoicing was in the testimony of a good conscience, as Paul did? Could he say, Happy is the man that condemneth not himself in the thing which he alloweth?* Rom. xiv. 22. Nay, said the Plaintiff, you are so far from this, that thy own thoughts condemn thee. Therefore thou canst not lay thine hand upon thy heart and say, in an holy triumph, *In the multitude of my thoughts within me thy comforts delight my soul.* Psalm xciv. 19. The Plaintiff added; *He that is born of God sinneth not.*

*Abimaaz.* Why, the devil sticks to his old text.

*Cushi.* Yes; and he will stick to it, until the poor believer either find out the real meaning of it, or else fall into error, or despondency under the devil's temptations about it. Satan threw down  
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Adam with a text of scripture, and took the same method when he tempted the Son of God.

*Abimaaz.* I think this is one of the most puzzling trials that ever Prodigalis had. It is a dreadful thing to a soul that is quickened, humbled, and blessed with a tender feeling of the evil of sin, and with a filial fear of God, and an heart bent to honour him, for such an one to be so left of God, as for his old wretched customs to be pursuing his mind, and entangling his thoughts, after he has so sorely suffered under the sight and sense of them. But, as poor Job says, *Such possess the iniquity of their youth*, even in that sense, though not the guilt of them.

For my part, I have often wished that God had took me to himself in my first love; or else had granted me a residence where I might never see man, woman, or child; yea, neither sun, moon, nor stars. For the world is full of nothing but evil; look which way you will, sin presents itself: and if that steals on the heart, then my comforts die; I wish either for heaven, or for the lonely cot of a hermit.

*Cushti.* If you had died in your first love, how could you have *served your generation*? and if you were shut up like a hermit, how could you *let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works*?

Your first request favours of a distrust of God's power to keep you; and the last favours of cowardice,

ardice, and of a narrow spirit: just as if the devil was to be left sole ranger of the world, because he has spread the earth with traps. No; it well becomes the saints, as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, to seek the welfare of the children of Israel, and the kingdom of their ever blessed Lord; to oppose the devil's reign, and expose the devil's works also; and so to weaken his interest as much as possible. And though we find it a perilous work, and are in imminent danger at it, yet the battle is the Lord's; the cause of truth is the Lord's cause; and his truth is our armour; and the promise of victory is sure to all the feed. The Lord tells us to *quit ourselves like men*, instead of *creeping into holes*: and we may depend upon it, that his *strength will be made perfect in our weakness*, because he hath promised it. And when he comes to say, in the great day, *Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord*, that will pay for all.

*Abimaaz.* Pray how long did Prodigalis labour under this trial?

*Cushi.* For many months; yet no man could hate sin more; no man mourned over it, struggled with it, or prayed against it, more than he did; but notwithstanding all his efforts, he found himself to be a man burdened with the *body of sin and death*, which, God knows, he sorely groaned under. Besides his situation was none of the most pleasing; he had a large flock to feed, whether his own soul was flourishing or barren; he had many enemies in  
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the world, as well as friends; his enemies *watched for his halting*, and his friends looked at him as a copy; the first looked for destruction, and the latter for perfection, and both were deceived; for though he had as base an heart as the worst of them, and more temptations to grapple with than all of them, yet God did not permit him to be *utterly cast down*, to gratify his enemies, though there was enough exposed to convince his friends that he was not perfect, but that the treasure was in an earthen vessel.

The poor creature travelled in this way till his very soul was bowed down within him, and Satan tempted him even to *chuse strangling rather than life*, Job vii. 15; or to drown himself, rather than suffer thus; yea, he wanted him to imitate Jonah, *leave the work*, and flee from it; he was so beset with temptations, and with conscience, that his very heart and soul failed him. However, at last he went to his Lord with as heavy an heart as mortal could bear. He first sat down in his chair and reasoned with his Lord, until his sorrow began to give way; he then kneeled on his knees—he confessed—he wept—he pleaded—he supplicated, until he obtained these sweet words as an answer to his prayer—*If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things*, 1 John iii. 20; he immediately felt strength communicated to his soul; his accusing conscience was silenced; he got up from his knees, and put the devil to flight with  
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this text—*My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever.* Psal. lxxiii. 26.

Now was the dear Redeemer more precious to Prodigalis than ever; his soul was sweetly becalmed, and blessed with a doubled portion of life and peace; every evil thought of his heart vanished—every besetting sin was detested and abhorred, and heaven itself seemed, if possible, to be in full view; and the poor man vainly thought, and indeed often said, that he was ripening for glory;—that his work was pretty well done—that he should not be long in this world, and that he was too happy to live. But the Lord counterbalanced his anxiety for heaven, by laying the concerns of his flock *in the midst of wolves*, his wife, family, and friends, on his mind, which *brought him into a strait between two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better than being here; nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you*, Phil. i. 23, 24, says Paul, and so Prodigalis thought, and therefore he prayed for submission to the will of God, that *whether he lived he might live to the Lord, or whether he died he might die to the Lord; that whether he lived therefore or whether he died, he might be the Lord's.*

*Abimaaz.* That is a most safe and a most blessed frame of mind—to be resigned to the will of God. There is no galling cross when our wills lay straight with the will of God; it is our perverse will contradicting,

tradicting, or laying counter to God's will, that makes the cross, and the loss is all our own; for when we have made it we are compelled to take it up. In this we act like Haman, who erected his own gallows at his own expence. The Saviour has coupled self-denial and the daily cross together; if self be denied, the cross will lay easy; if self be consulted, then the cross galls us. But blessed for ever be the dear Redeemer, who knows whereof we are made—who knows the weakness of human nature, and confessed it; though his body and soul were perfectly free and pure from that sin and corruption that we feel, yet he complained that *the spirit was truly willing, but the flesh was weak.*

The faithfulness of the Saviour appears wonderful in the repeated deliverances of Prodigalis. Well might Eliphaz tell Job that God *would deliver him in six troubles, yea in seven no evil should touch him.* Job v. 19. Prodigalis is a living witness of the delivering hand of God, and must be well acquainted with the blessed Saviour, especially in his glorious office as an Advocate.

*Cushi.* Yes, the office of Christ as an Advocate is precious to Prodigalis, and to other poor tempted souls, who lay under the accusations of Satan; indeed every poor sinner has three to accuse him; sometimes his sins cry with an accusing voice, as the sins of Sodom are said to do, Gen. xviii. 20, 21. Conscience also will often accuse him, live how he may; and Satan will accuse him right or wrong; but,



but, blessed be God, *we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins*; and I believe it is not an easy matter for Satan to get the ear of God the Father against us, because he has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ; this Prodigalis found by blessed experience, therefore he continually looks to and calls on his Advocate, every time he feels an accusation; he sees the need of Jesus Christ in every office-character that he sustains, and is very wise in eying the Saviour in them according to the various trials that he passes through.

*Abimaaz.* And pray how did Prodigalis manage that text that Satan so often buffeted him with; namely—*He that is born of God sinneth not*; that is a very mysterious text; did he ever make it out? John says, *that if we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us*; and James says, *In many things we offend all*; and Solomon declares *there is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not*; and yet John says, *He that is born of God sinneth not*. Some say, it means that a just man doth not serve sin, and that he doth not sin with the full consent of his will, as an unregenerate man doth.

*Cushi.* That is a poor comment. Jonah sinned with the full consent of his will when he chose a voyage to Joppa, rather than a walk to Nineveh. Paul says, *With the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin*. Rom. vii. 25. The dreadful evil that Adam contracted by his fall,

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and which is propagated to us by natural generation, is called the *old man*, even in regenerate persons. *That which is born of the flesh is flesh*, and will never be mended ; it will retain its own devilish nature—devilish motions—and desperate strugglings for mastery, even in the best of men, as may be seen in Paul's complaint in the seventh to the Romans. This is called the *old man* ; and, like a desperate criminal under sentence, it will oppose that grace that reigns over it ; inasmuch, that when the believer would do good, evil is present with him ; and how to perform that which is good he finds not ; it is as binding as a law, and as furious as an hero ;—*I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind.* Rom. vii. 23.

This being the case, John says, *If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us ;* while, on the other hand, all the fruits of the spirit, which is the whole of grace wrought in the soul by the spirit, is said to be born of God. Life makes us issues from death, Psal. lxxviii. 20 ; light makes us children of light ; faith is said to be born of God, and to overcome the world ; to a lively hope we are said to be begotten ; and all these things being promised in the word, the word is called the incorruptible seed. that lives and abides for ever ; the Holy Spirit applying the word and all promised grace, from Christ's fulness, promised to us in the word. This new man sins not : and love, which is the principal thing in this new man, is called charity,

which thinketh no evil, nor can it do any. John was not without sin, nor without committing it, (for no man is exempt) as he owns; *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* Now, a believer being denominated a new creature, because of the new man that is in him, he is said also not to sin, because the leading faculties of his soul are against it: I *would* do good, and with my *mind* I serve the law of God. Now, as my will is bent upon good, and thus to will is always present with me; and my mind is likewise engaged in this service, for with the mind I serve the law of God: but when I would do good evil is present; and how to perform what I will, I find not; for this law in my members wars against the law of my mind, and brings me into captivity; so that, against my renewed will, against my purified mind, yea, and against divine love that dwells in me, I sin. What I hate, that do I; what I would not, that I do; and what I would, that do I not: therefore it is no more I, but sin that dwelleth in me. That which is born of the spirit is spirit, and will never be otherwise; and that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and will be always the same; grace will be grace, and sin will be sin. With the mind we shall ever serve the law of God, and with the flesh the law of sin.

*Abimaaz.* I believe that to be the real meaning of the text, because it harmonizes with other parts of God's word; and for my part I am satisfied with

your thoughts on it; and I take it for granted, that it was made out in that way to poor Prodigalis.

*Cusbi.* It was; and therefore the devil never offered to give him another lecture on that subject, when he found that he understood its meaning. Satan works chiefly in the dark with God's people; when they are in dark frames, then he comes boldly; but when the rays of God shine upon them, he stands at a distance, he *bates the light* with perfect hatred.

*Abimaaz.* O what a great salvation are we saved with! What potent and subtil enemies have poor believers got to grapple with! And what need is there of being fervent in spirit, and diligent in the means of grace, which God hath appointed for our growth and encouragement. Pray how does Prodigalis go on now?

*Cusbi.* He goes on as most of the Lord's people do, I believe. Sometimes he is up, and sometimes down; sometimes in the light, and sometimes in the dark. He often complains of his wicked heart, and of the weakness of his faith; his short-lived joys, and long-lived corruptions; but *against hope he still believes in hope*; and says, that he shall neither believe nor hope in vain. Satan cannot dispute him out of his sonship, nor buffet him with the word of God, as he formerly has done, on account of the corruptions of his own heart. For he says there is not a corruption that he groans under, but what he

he can find some saints in the word of God that have groaned under the same; and while he is in the footsteps of the flock he thinks he is safe. All that he is afraid of is, that God should leave him to himself; he is truly sensible of his own weakness, and at times finds it no easy matter to believe that God will keep him upright even to the end, though he believes he shall be eternally saved. He dreads the thought of falling; the thoughts of broken bones, and of going halting to the grave, is a terror to his soul.

*Abimaaz.* The Lord preserve and keep him through this perilous wilderness; and when you see him, tell him that Ahimaaz, formerly a *tidings-bearer*, a Reubenite, one *unstable as water*, saluteth him, and wishes grace, mercy, and peace to him. And now what shall I say to thee, with whom I have taken such sweet counsel, and with whom I have spent the sweetest moments that I ever spent. The Lord reward thee, my brother—*send thee help from the sanctuary, and strengthen thee out of Zion—accept thine offerings—grant thee according to thine own heart—and fulfil all thy counsels*; and God forbid that I should ever cease praying for thee, whom God has made so great a blessing to me.

*Cushi.* The Lord be with thee, my dear brother, and *strengthen thee by his spirit's might in the inner man, that thou mayest be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus*; and thou must not wonder if some temptation should befall thee after this long and

happy conversation that we have had. Remember *adversity* and *prosperity* are set one against the other; expect a *daily cross*, and a *glorious end*, and thou wilt not be disappointed of either. Fare thee well; the *shield of Abraham*, and the *fear of Isaac*, be ever with thee.

*Abimaaz.* Amen; and with thee also.

THE END.